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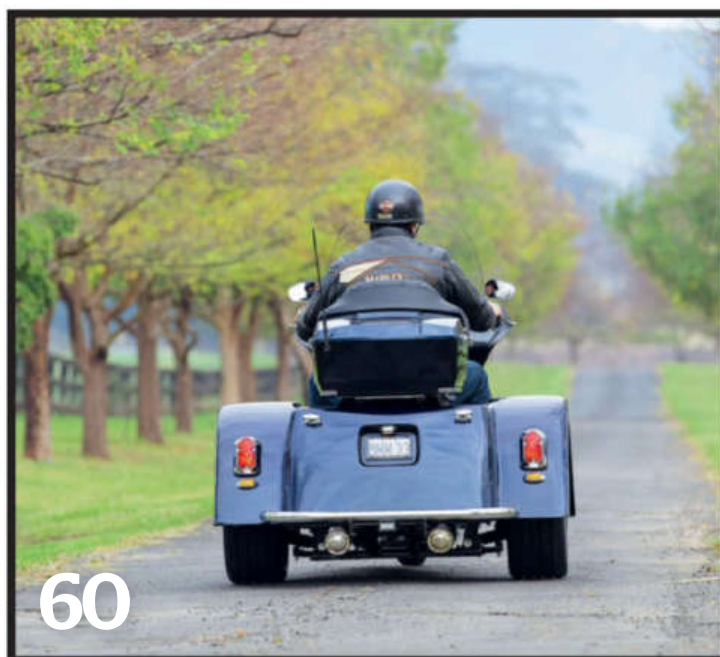
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**JUST GET OUT AND RIDE.
STOP MAKING EXCUSES.
YOU CAN THANK ME LATER.**



G'day

It's the middle of August and we're enjoying a magical sunny patch. Yeah, the nights and early mornings are still cool but the days are sunny. The next few months are my favourite time for riding before it gets overly hot or humid.

A mate of mine was whingeing about a lack of riding recently. He lives in

Melbourne and used the feeble excuse that it's cold and wet a lot of the time there during winter. When I asked if he'd bought himself a set of decent wet-weather gear since moving south over a year ago, he went quiet and started trying to talk about this great little brewery he'd found. Sadly, he's become a Melbourne hipster. Time for an intervention!

The price difference between average and good riding gear will be quickly forgotten when you realise that the rain bucketing down on you isn't easing and you've still got a few more hours on the road before you get to where you're going. It's at that point you'll be thankful you saved for a few more weeks and spent your dollars on the very best gear you could afford. Stretch your budget to include names like Kevlar and Gore Tex. You'll be thankful when it all turns to crap.

Riding in the rain or cold isn't just a winter thing and readers from north of the Tropic of Capricorn are still trying to make the connection between the two. When I was young and doing courier work, I hated riding in the rain, but it was a necessary evil. March and April 1985 are the wettest months I can remember. But the gear I had was a bit different to what I now wear. The

improvement in riding gear has made the greatest difference, though the hard-as-nails Avon Road Runners of 1985 weren't exactly the stickiest. The difference to today's tyres is staggering.

Same with the bikes we ride. Brakes and suspension have improved dramatically over the past 30 years. Power delivery is much smoother from EFI-equipped engines, especially compared to the home-tuned carbs and inefficient pod filters we all used.

Looking out the door I can see the sun's shining so I'm breaking out the woollen long-johns, Gore Tex-lined boots and gloves, Kevlar-lined jeans, waterproof jacket and helmet that keeps any water on the outside without fogging. In case it snows or rains, a set of nylon overpants and jacket don't take up that much room. Then I'll roll a modern cruiser out of the shed and ride it. Hell, I may look like Bibendum when I pass you and your car but I'll be the bloke with the huge grin on his face at the roadhouse.

There's no excuse for not riding year-round in Australia. Except for ageing bones. That may be a valid excuse. What do you reckon?

Have fun,

Mick Withers

NEXT ISSUE

What's coming up in *Cruiser & Trike 7.5*?

Looking through the mess on my desktop, I can see we've already got tests on the Indian Dark Horse, Harley-Davidson Street Glide CVO and Ducati Diavel. Looks as though there's also a Day in the Saddle yarn from New Zealand's North Island. Moto Guzzi is about to release its new Audace and Eldorado versions of the California, so there's a good chance that they'll get a mention too.

All this and much more in *C&T 7.5*, on sale 3 December.



star



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Oscar Wilde



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INDIAN ROADMASTER

Big twin cruising at the interstate level.

Words: Mick Withers Photos: Mick Withers & Mark Hinchliffe

This is a big motorcycle. It occupies a lot of floor space when sitting still and about the same when moving. Sitting still is where we're starting our voyage of discovery.

We've talked amongst ourselves as well as with many of you about testing bikes from the top-end of the touring cruiser market. We decided that, provided the

individual bike fits in with our idea of what constitutes a cruiser, we'll give it a run and share the news. The Indian Roadmaster is the first touring cruiser to earn a place since the big change of 2013.

So, parked in my bike shed and consuming a lot of floor space is the Indian Roadmaster. It's a physically large bike and that may be daunting to some riders. The topbox with its padded

armrests appears to sit up high and that may be part of the optical illusion. The 422kg wet weight may also make a difference to potential riders.

Packing for a 10-day trip to Queensland resulted in my normal meagre pile of stuff. When I carried it all out to the bike shed, I quickly realised that there was still a whole topbox sitting empty! My Bell Rogue helmet and a pair of Rossi walking





boots helped relieve the empty space. A few other bits and pieces that were never used also rode north and back with me but that's better than carrying air. The rack on the lid of the topbox is rated at 2.2kg but the heaviest thing I put on the lid was a Contour Roam 3 camera and suction cup mount. If you carry more of the essentials than I do, or camp out and need a swag and whatever else you feel important to carry, you might use the rack; but I left it untouched. Mind you, I did use it as a spot to tie a microfibre towel so it could dry while I was riding!

The saddlebags have top-opening lids that open to the outside and make it easy to add or subtract luggage. The addition of central locking — yes, really — to the saddlebags and topbox was a welcome discovery. Locking was as simple as pushing the right-hand button on the lower tank dash. I rode through a bit of reasonably serious rain on the way south and there were no signs of water inside either saddlebag or topbox. Not sure about dust as I didn't ride on any dirt roads.

We're not done with storage areas just

yet. On each side of the Roadmaster is a large leg shield that incorporates the front crash bars. The top section of each includes a non-lockable glovebox. I found it perfect for a drink bottle, spare glasses and other small objects. Again, there was no sign of water ingress.

Easily missed was a flap on the lower right-hand side of the fairing. I found it after flicking through the 185-page Indian owner's manual. Opening it reveals a padded envelope just the right size to hold my music-filled iPhone 4S. Also tucked away in there is a USB plug that matches perfectly with a lead from the phone. Before I left Sydney, I hit random on iTunes on the phone and never opened that flap until I got home again. The onboard stereo system provided the rest of the magic need to make music play whenever the ignition button was pushed and the fob was within range. Don't ask me about Bluetooth. It's part of the package but I find it easier to plug and play. Also, I refuse to talk on the phone while riding so the need to pair devices was, ah, a mute point. Unlike the sound produced by

the stereo and speakers, which was loud enough to keep me bopping away happily at all speeds. The controls were all simple and easy enough to make things louder or skip songs because that's about the extent of it for me. Provided the music is clear and loud enough to hear, I'm happy.

Basics and music loaded, it was time to hit the road. Because it was early in the morning and a bit fresh, I turned on the electric seat warmer. My camera bag was strapped on the wide and deep pillion seat but didn't require warming so that switch wasn't flicked. The similarly equipped handgrips were also activated and by the time the engine was warmed and first gear selected, my hands and bum were nicely toasty. I'd never experienced a heated seat before but at this time of day and in the morning's single-digit temperature, it was appreciated. Rather than much-thicker gloves, I decided to set off wearing my favoured Five Stunt gloves, a leather glove more suited to summer than winter. The warmer gloves were in the topbox and that's where they stayed for the rest of the day. With 10 levels of heating available for

GRINS & GRIPES

GRINS

Mile muncher

GRIPES

Heavy when walking it in and out of parking spots.

People want to talk to you everywhere you stop.



the hands, and excellent wind protection from the fairing, my digits stayed warm.

By a simple press of the upper or lower portion of a button, the screen moves up or down. I found a location that suited me perfectly and that's where the screen stayed till somewhere north of Newcastle when I got bored and spent a while adjusting it to try and find an even more perfect spot where the windflow over my head matched the vision and desired wind noise.

That was after I rode it from Wahroonga to Hexham on cruise control! The Roadmaster's cruise control is the easiest to use I've yet found. The buttons are on the right-hand switch block with a single button for on and off, and a rocker switch for resume/accelerate and set/decelerate. Up or down adjustments were roughly 1-2km/h for each button push, making it easy to set your own speed relative to the posted limit and desire to push the envelope. One feature I really liked is that you can use the brake to drop speed, such as when you're coming into one of the three or four fishing villages up north on the Pacific (or any of the 374 road construction zones), and then when you reactivate the cruise, it does so at your new speed and not at the figure you'd set earlier. It may seem a small thing but it was much easier than switching it off and back on again to reset the speed. Nice.

Hand controls were all easy and intuitive to use with span-adjustment on the front brake lever to suit your own preferences. The clutch lever is non-adjustable, but

careful adjustment of the cable would allow a degree of adjustability – and the clutch was light and offered plenty of feel for the take-up point. Foot controls were also good, especially the gear lever that's a toe-only affair. Have I ever mentioned that I don't like most heel levers? Not unusual when you've got size 13 feet.

The footboards were roomy and right where my feet wanted to be most of the time. If this was my bike, or it became one of our long-termers, I'd explore a pair of highway pegs as a way of being able to stretch and move about. The pillion footboards offer three height adjustments, which should satisfy most.

With the seat heater turned off — very easy with two separate switches on the left of the pillion seat for high, off or low — the leather seat was very comfortable. With the camera bag supporting my lower back above the deep seat, I clocked a near-1000km day. I left western Sydney early in the morning and three stops for fuel and food later, I was 980km away on the Moggill Ferry; in 9.6 hours according to the on-board trip computer.

The ride was superb. Even with the regular punctuations from road works including a stretch from the Hastings River on Port Macquarie's northern edge that wound painfully to a point just south of Coffs-bloody-Harbour. North of that blight on the Pacific Highway there were pockets of resistance to flow at regular intervals. Yeah, yeah; I know they're improving the roads and making them safer for the grey nomad sheeple with their hopelessly







underpowered four-wheel-drive and caravan combination. There were more than a few of those plodding along at posted speed minus 10 to 20km/h.

That's the quickest trip I've ever managed from western Sydney to western Brisbane but it wasn't the toughest. I walked into the bottle shop at Bellbowrie and was surprised at just how fresh I felt. I've done that same trip a number of times and this is definitely the best I'd pulled up. The way that the Indian Roadmaster devours distances is amazing. You could easily punch out an AHA 1600km in 48 hours Challenge with a day to spare. The engine worked happily everywhere from the stop-start of peak-hour and bloody roadworks to the free-flowing traffic on freeways. Backing the engine is a gear-

driven primary drive and a six-speed gearbox that gave the option of more than one ratio for anything I asked of it. The 111 ThunderStroke really is a flexible engine, even at this higher weight. I found myself happily sitting on the speed limit with the last two ratios sitting idle a few times. Mind you, fifth and sixth are both overdrives so that is not as radical as it first sounds. Overtaking was a simple case of lining up your planned attack and executing it. When I did drop a gear or two, the manoeuvre was obviously quicker but the bonus was the booming exhaust roar. The pipes were not stock standard – these had been replaced with Indian's own Stage 1 mufflers. Definitely one of the best exhaust symphonies I have played.

As impressive as the forward motion

was the stopping part. Squeeze the lever and pedal for rapid reduction in forward velocity. There is ABS available but I do not recall meeting it. What else do you want to hear? Squeeze; stop. It really was that simple.

Rolling round corners is where most of the fun happens and the Roadmaster was pretty well-equipped in that department. On the way north I touched down a few times but there was nothing major and certainly not heart-stopping. Following a day riding up and over Mt Glorious, I ended up at Victory & Indian in Brisbane. After chatting with Robertino about the Roadmaster, he stuck it up on a hoist to adjust the rear drive belt. While it was in the air, he also adjusted the rear shock absorber to suit my weight better. The

difference really was noticeable. He also showed me the easy way to drop the swingarm to make rear wheel removal a much simpler process. Place a stand under the flat sump, remove a circlip and extract a bar, then raise the bike on the stand. The wheel stays on the ground and when the bike is high enough, it can be rolled straight out. Brilliant and much easier than some of the rear wheel extractions I've done over the years.

With the rear suspension now working better for my weight, the trip south was even better. Nothing touched down and the actual ride was better. Slightly firmer. This was especially noticeable when I turned off the Pacific Highway at Woodburn and headed inland to Casino. The road rolls along between dairies and is not one of the greatest road surfaces but gave the suspension a decent workout on the straight sections as well as the bendy

bits. The Summerland Way into Grafton is a quieter and more enjoyable north-south route, only spoilt by the need to rejoin the coast road for the stretch south. With cruise control set, there was a chance to try out the high beam between oncoming trucks. The Roadmaster's LED headlights are very good. No wildlife was spotted venturing out onto the road, but if there had been, I'd have spotted them in plenty of time to take evasive action.

The freeway was also the best place to watch the numbers available from the on-board computer mainframe. The variety of information was more than most of us would ever need but I could instantly see battery voltage, gear position, ambient air temperature, fuel range, average fuel economy, heated grips' heat-level setting, main odometer, trip odometers and a clock. Then there was information on tyre pressures and engine hours along with oil



IF IT WERE MY BIKE WHAT I WOULD CHANGE ...

The number of kilometres recorded on the odometer.



and filter life as an increasing percentage. As songs randomly played, the artist and song title appeared, but only for the tracks I'd labelled when loading them. There were more than a few Track 1s!

As the temperature dropped, the time came to close the air vents located in the shrouds in front of the floorboards. They reminded me of quarter-vents in older utes and cars.

Let's be blunt, the Indian Roadmaster is not the ideal bike for your daily commute into the city centre from the outer suburbs in any Australian state capital. There are much better choices for that role. Out on the highway eating up big distances is where the Roadmaster really shines. It is a premium touring cruiser. Ride one before placing a deposit on anything else.



QUICKSPECS

Model: Indian Roadmaster

Price: \$35,995 (Ride away)

Engine: ThunderStroke, air-cooled V-twin, 3-cam, 2 valves per cylinder

Bore x stroke: 101 x 113mm

Displacement: 1811cc (111ci)

Compression: 9.5:1

Power: Not stated

Torque: 139Nm

Transmission: 6-speed, wet multi-plate clutch, gear primary drive, belt final drive

Suspension: F: 46mm telescopic forks, 119mm travel. R: Single air-assisted shock, cast aluminium swingarm, 114mm travel

Brakes: F: 300mm floating rotors with

four-piston caliper. R: 300mm floating rotor with twin-piston caliper.

Tyres: Dunlop Elite F: 130/90B16 R: 180/65B16

Wheels: Cast F: 16x3.5in R: 16x5.0in

Frame: Cast aluminium

Seat height: 673mm

Wheelbase: 1668mm

Length: 2656mm

Weight: 422kg (wet)

Rake/Trail: 25 deg/150mm

Fuel capacity: 20.8 litres

Warranty: 2 years, unlimited distance with roadside assistance

Servicing intervals: 8000km or 12 months

FYI

Here's the stuff you need to know about to make your life complete, or at least make you better informed.

2015 SYDNEY MOTORCYCLE SHOW

Homebush is the place to be on the weekend of 20–22 November for the 2015 Sydney Motorcycle Show in the Showgrounds at Sydney Olympic Park. We'll be there as a part of the Universal Magazines' super stand with Road Rider, Rapid Bikes and Retrobike magazines. We'll be selling subscriptions and hanging out talking to people all weekend. Come and say g'day.

Check out the Facebook page for even more info — [SydneyMotorcycleShow](#), or log on to [troybaylisseyvents.com](#) and follow the links.



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CONTOUR ROAM 3 CAMERA

On-board cameras have become popular for any number of reasons. Contour cameras are designed by professionals, but simple to operate for everyday users like us!

The Contour 3's basics are impressive: waterproof up to 10 metres without a case; 270-degree rotating lens; laser alignment; single-button recording without the need to fumble with an on-off switch; mounts included; full 1080HD video; single-shot and lower-resolution video options; and a neat aerodynamic shape.

We're testing a couple at the moment, along with a Moto Mounts kit that includes a variety of stick-on mounts as well as a brilliant suction-cup mount. The cameras are much better than our feeble editing attempts and you can check out the results on our Facebook page. As we get more comfortable with this modern technology, we'll explore more of the features but here is our initial review: simple to use.

Check out contouraustalia.com.au for more technical info.

SEGURA BROOKE JACKET

A new age in motorcycle apparel is upon us with industry-leading French label Segura having just hit Australia to provide riders with its latest luxury offering, the Brooke jacket.

Made from soft, supple and dynamic buffalo leather with a removable thermal liner, the Brooke jacket is also completely waterproof, adding versatility to its long list of features and making it the perfect jacket all year round.

Don't let the sleek design fool you, Segura's full range of jackets is made to stand the test of time. Completely CE approved (EN13595-1:2002) with shoulder, back and elbow protectors (the last being height-adjustable for individual preference) you'll feel completely relaxed in the Brooke jacket as you cruise the open road. With a price tag of \$699 RRP, you'll find the Segura Brooke at better bike shops or online at ficeda.com.au



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SHARK SKWAL

The latest innovation from leading motorcycle helmet brand Shark, the SKWAL, is an addition to the existing Pulse range, and is the first helmet to incorporate LED lights into its design.

The SKWAL's three cleverly integrated neon green LEDs are situated in the front mouthpiece, the front air intake and the rear air vents.

The LEDs operate via a small in-built battery which is fully rechargeable via a micro USB cable. The SKWAL's battery has up to 5000 recharge cycles and a huge battery life of five hours on the continuous light mode, or 10 hours in flashing mode.

Even with the incorporated lights and battery pack, the Shark SKWAL weighs in at 1470 grams. According to Shark, its aerodynamic design and the clever Autoseal visor-sealing gasket make the SKWAL one of the most stable, fatigue-free and noise-free helmets available.

The SKWAL comes standard with all of the helmet wizardry Shark is renowned for, including a flip-down internal sun visor, Shark easy-fit for wearers of glasses, micro-lock buckle system, a fully removable and washable lining and compatibility with Sharktooth, Shark's very own and very compact Bluetooth intercom system.

Coming in black, white with matt and gloss finishes, as well as graphic and colour schemes, the Shark SKWAL has a RRP of \$349.95 for plain colours and \$379.95 for graphics.

The SKWAL is available in XS, S, M, L & XL – check out ficeda.com.au for more info.

2015 WALL TO WALL RIDE

The Wall to Wall Remembrance Ride takes place every year in September to honour the service and sacrifices of many police officers killed while in the line of duty. The ride helps to raise money for each state's Police Legacy charities and also works to promote safe and lawful motorcycling.

This year Victory Motorcycles has put its hand up to be a proud sponsor of this important cause and ride.

In addition to sponsoring the event, Victory Motorcycles will donate \$100 from every bike bought by a law-enforcement officer in 2015 to the officer's home state Police Legacy.

Peter Harvey, Victory Motorcycles Country Manager,

says: "Victory Motorcycles is passionate about being involved with Police Legacy and supporting this important charity in the community."

"The Wall to Wall Ride for 2015 will be the largest gathering of police motorcycle enthusiasts ever assembled in Australia," adds Wall to Wall's organiser, NSW Assistant Police Commissioner Michael Corboy.

Riders will start their journeys from their respective State Police Memorial en route to Canberra. Then, on Saturday 12 September, at the National Police Memorial, participants from all over Australia will gather to pay tribute to fallen comrades.

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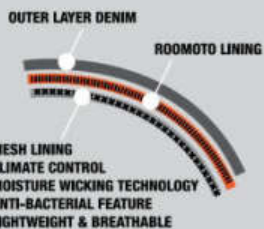
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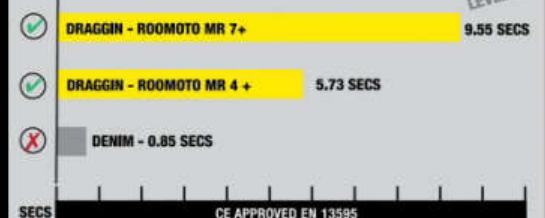
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NEW ROADSTER TEST

CAN-AM SPYDER F3-S

TIME TO CRUISE OR HOON;
THE CHOICE IS YOURS!

Words: Tim Sanford Photos: Tim Munro

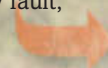


This is the fourth of Can-Am's Spyders we've tested and it is far and away the best yet. The RS-S was the first with the 998cc Rotax V-twin, the similarly-powered ST-S Limited followed, the RT Limited was third with the new 1330cc ACE triple and now we have the F3-S with the 1330 ACE triple as its power plant. The F3-S combines the best of the previous machines but adds some features of its own, which I really like. The engine is a major step forward: it is more powerful in the mid-range, more powerful up top, smoother throughout the rev range and if you treat it gently, it is actually more economical than the 'little' 998 V-twin. One of its most endearing

aspects is the way it will happily cruise along, the bike just rolling through the scenery making almost no noise until you give it lots of revs and heaps of throttle when it makes that spine-tingling triple howl which is just fabulous. I loved thrashing it through the twisties.

There are some good new things on the F3-S. One is the way the footpegs are huge and almost industrial: when I first got on this Spyder I was a bit disappointed that the narrow tank wouldn't allow me to grip it with my knees during enthusiastic cornering but the location of the footpegs makes that unnecessary; I was able to plant the outside boot on the massive peg and that gave me all the control and

stability I could want. Another asset is the SE6 gearbox: it has the same little paddles on the left handlebar that you flick with your thumb for upshifts and flick with your index finger for downshifts. The gearbox is called semi-automatic because as you slow down it automatically shifts down through the gears for you. Previous boxes had this feature but I found the downshifts a bit tardy if you were approaching a corner quickly; this box is significantly faster and it also does up-changes perceptibly quicker too. At first I found that wearing winter gloves would occasionally give me unintentional upshifts because I had touched the paddle; but that's my fault, not the Spyder's.





Another feature is the excellent reduction in the way Nanny steps in and spoils the fun. I was very critical of this in the test of the RS-S and although this new system isn't quite perfect, it's pretty close to it.

When you sit on this Spyder you may feel that the seating position is not quite ideal. For my 185cm frame the 'bars and pegs were both a bit too close, leaving me a bit cramped for space. Usually you just have to put up with that or make changes to bars to get the fit right. Well, Spyder has realised that humans are quite diverse when it comes to body sizes so they've come up with their 'UFit' system. You can look further into this on Can-Am's website but basically it gives you four handlebar selections and five footpeg positions to choose from. Our test Spyder came from Western Motorcycles in Penrith and when you buy your F3-S from them, they'll tailor

the riding position for you as part of the initial cost of the bike. It's supposed to be an option (ie, cost to you) but Westerns aren't going to do it that way. Here's a point about the footpegs: in cruising mode my boot heels tended to rub on the frame rails and as they were painted a quite spectacular orange, I think may quickly show marks. Perhaps a black plastic boot guard could be fitted?

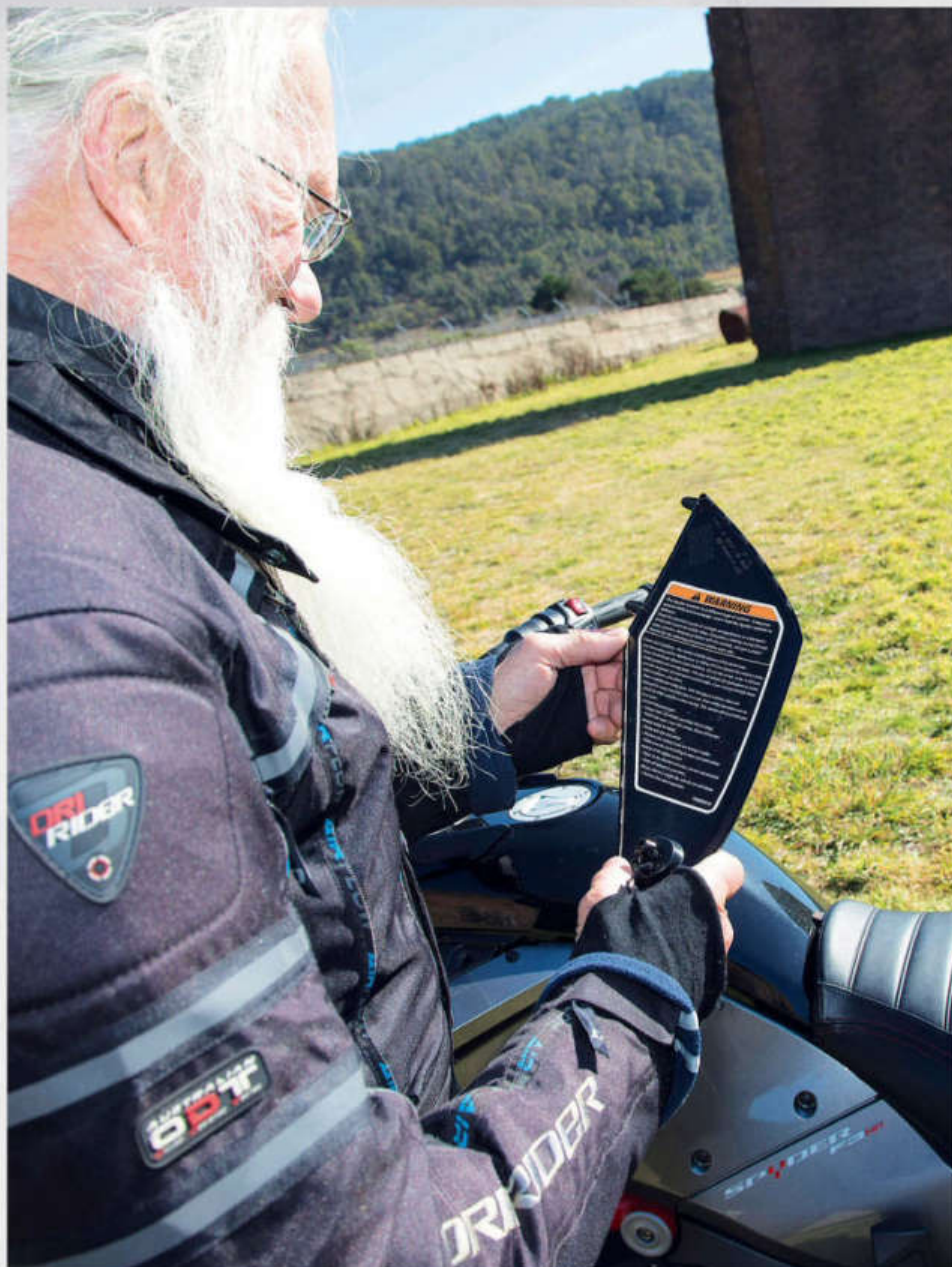
The seating position is cruiser style and it allows you to relax into the ride. The seat is big and comfortable and I found it good for quite a long time in the saddle. One of the details that helps in that is the small rise between the rider and passenger's seats – it makes you sit more upright. The pillion seat is very wide and comfortable and it has large grab rails on either side. These are so wide that they make getting on and off a bit of a task, so the best way to do that is

to put one foot on the pillion peg (massive, like the rider's peg) and swing yourself over.

The fairing nose at the front is hinged to cover the luggage space and at first I thought that it looked a bit small but the space has been designed to take a full-face helmet; my Kabuto Aeroblade 3 fitted perfectly and it's an XL. If you wear an open-face hat it'll leave a bit of extra room.

As for styling, how ugly is ugly? There is no middle ground with Spyders – people either love them or hate them. The massive tubing of the frame is a real feature and when it is accentuated with the orange paint it made the bike a point of interest wherever it went. Personally, I love the weird look they have and although it conjures images of some strange insect, because it's a Spyder it just has to be described as 'arachnoidal'.

Getting ready to ride and you'll find the



GRINS

So much fun playing sports mode I couldn't stop laughing

GRIPE

Duplication of the speedo and tacho
Please give it a much brighter indicator warning light. That's a safety issue



mirrors are set low and well forward on the fairing so they give a very good view of what's behind you. I found it a fair reach to adjust them but it's possible.

The unique Spyder Sedate Start-up Sequence hasn't changed much and by that I mean you still need to turn the thing on with the key, go and make a cup of coffee and by the time you get back it will be ready to go. It is a bit faster now (that means maybe instant coffee) but it is still tedious. I ask the question again: why can't the thing be put into sleep mode so you don't have to go through it every time? Starting requires the sequential pressing of a number of buttons and includes the need to have your boot on the brake (no bad thing) and then the engine can start. Owners will soon get used to this procedure so the sequence is no big deal but the time it takes will continue to irk.



THE TRIANGLE

Seat to bars: 810mm
Bars to footboard: 740mm
Footboard to seat: 830mm

Information is provided by the instrument panel with the idiotic duplication of the speedo and tachometer with digital and analogue units. Why? One sort is enough and to add to the stupidity, the digital tachometer adds 'RPM' to the numbers. Why? Do the Spyder designers seriously think that we could imagine the number of 3750 say, to mean road speed? We wish!

You already know Spyders have simple controls: you twist the throttle grip to go forwards and you press the brake pedal to stop. Moving away from a stop is so easy – you just engage first gear and wind on some throttle. The response from the engine is instant and the power transmission is smooth and refined. Changing up through the gears requires



a touch or flick of the thumb and the change happens smoothly and faster than before. Before you know it you're cruising through the scenery without a care in the world. When you need to keep to a steady speed there's the very good cruise control (operated by the right thumb), one of the best I've tested. It's a simple slide control for on/off and another simple motion to go faster or slower. Naturally it will disengage when you use the brakes. I found cruising on this very sports-oriented Spyder very comfortable and one thing I especially liked was the fact that



the design at the front makes the air flow around your torso far better than you'd expect with no screen. That made freeway travel far less of a chore than is usual with a naked bike.

Fuel frugality is a feature of the new triple and over my test I averaged 13km per litre. Normal use would see better figures than that and there's a button marked ECO, which puts the engine into economy mode. I never used it because I was too busy enjoying the Spyder's sporting abilities but if it was my daily ride I think I would. Around town the



machine is comfortable and with those two prominent mudguards over the front wheels you're always able to judge just how wide the track is. The turning circle is quite small for such a long machine and parking spaces are easy to fit into, helped by the so-easy-to-use reverse. Press the buttons in the right sequence and the machine goes backwards to wherever you want it. Riding at night is good with the headlights throwing a good spread on low and high beam. One small point is that the lights would be even better if low beam stayed on when high beam was selected. In this country I reckon that the more lumens you've got lancing out into the darkness, the safer you'll be. The indicator system could do with improvement (still) because although they self-cancel when you make a significant turn such as into a side street, they don't do that when you change lanes

and because the miniature warning light on the dashboard is invisible in daylight (too small, and not bright enough) there is a real danger that you could change lanes to the left and then leave the left indicator on. A car driver impatient to get into the traffic will pull out in front of you. Not good at all.

The suspension has quality components with Fox up front and Sachs at the back. Strangely there is adjustment at the front but not at the rear. That didn't seem to matter much and the ride over good roads is smooth and over secondary roads it is better than most large cruisers. The F3-S seems higher at the front (RS-S was very low slung) and it doesn't scrape, even down the goat track to my place. You still need to be mindful of speed humps in car parks though. Of course there is always the steering input you're going to get from bumps but that's something you get used

to. The steering is a paradox – more precise in corners yet more relaxed when you're cruising on the straights.

Because it's so responsive, it won't hold a super-precise line through corners if they're bumpy because with every bump there's a tiny twitch of the 'bars. It's not a problem. How can I say that? Well it just is; a big part of Spydering is relaxing your grip and letting the machine get on with it.

But this is a sports Spyder so how does it stack up when you want to have fun?

There are three personalities:

Gentle relaxed cruising with the joy of riding something utterly different to what anybody else is riding (except other Spyder riders, of course).

Great fun when you want to play sports riders and here's where it adds to the fun because the impression of speed is a little bit higher than your actual speed and that





IF IT WERE MY BIKE WHAT I WOULD CHANGE ...

I'd cover the orange frame rails with a heel guard to keep them pretty

will help you stay out of trouble. You can push it into corners and it will drive out under power – something of a contrast to the RS-S. You can throw this one around and play hoon and it will go along with the fun. In that mode it is thoroughly exhilarating to ride.

Manic mode will eventually get Nanny out of her rocking chair to spoil the fun. It happens like this: when you push it really hard, as when you're playing manic ex-sidecar racer, the brakes will come on with a suddenness which is unexpected and quite surprising. Now there are two ways you can look at this. First, I shouldn't have been playing manic ex-sidecar racer on the road and I accept that but second, and this could happen in normal seriously sporting riding, you could find yourself in the middle of a corner with the need to make a sudden move to avoid a pothole, animal or whatever. The Spyder will brake briefly but sharply and although that will settle the machine, if one of your mates is right up your clacker, there will be a serious 'Oh dear' moment.

The brakes are superb and the ABS is brilliant. I tried to trick it by braking super-hard with one wheel on the tar and the other in the dirt. The Spyder just stopped – and fast!



QUICKSPECS

Model: Can-Am Spyder F3-S

Price: \$28,890 (Ride away)

Engine: Rotax 1330 ACE, liquid-cooled, inline triple, EFI and electronic throttle control

Bore x stroke: 84 x 80mm

Displacement: 1300cc

Power: 86kW (115hp) @ 7250rpm

Torque: 130Nm (96ft/lb) @ 5000rpm

Transmission: SE6: six-speed plus reverse, semi-automatic, belt final drive.

Suspension: F: double A-arm with anti-roll bar and FOX Podium shock absorbers. R: swingarm with Sachs shock absorber

Brakes: Foot operated with ABS.

F: 270mm rotors with Brembo Monobloc four-piston fixed calipers.

R: 270mm rotor with Brembo single-piston floating caliper

Tyres: KR31 F: 165/55-R15

R: 225/50-R15

Frame: Tubular steel cradle

Seat height: 675mm

Wheelbase: 1709mm

Length: 2642mm

Width: 1497mm

Height: 1099mm

Weight: 386kg (dry)

Fuel capacity: 27L

Warranty: 2 years, unlimited km with roadside assistance

Servicing intervals: 15,000km

One more thing: previous Spyders have been smooth and refined off the line and this one is the same if you like that sort of thing. Or you can keep your foot planted on the brake pedal, grab first and a fistful of throttle and then, when the revs get high, lift your foot. The result is a screeching, howling, rubber-shredding anti-social neighbourhood-menacing bag of fun. Of course, we haven't included any photos of that sort of behaviour because this is a family publication and the F3-S is civilised – well, most of the time. *[Truth is, I want to do that! – MW]*

For me, this is the best Spyder so far. The breed is evolving into a machine that covers every riding need and does it very well. As always it's a very different experience but it's truly fantastic.



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NEW BIKE TEST

NIGHT ROD SPECIAL

MUCH MORE THAN POINT AND SQUIRT.

Words & photos: Mark Hinchliffe



It low-flies under the radar, out of a back street on a drizzly night, spinning its fat rubber and snarling at the pedestrians, throwing down the gauntlet to the wide boys in their daddies' Lambos.

It's the Night Rod Special and it's the king of the night life!

A mean, muscular machine that strikes fear into anyone who dares to defy it in the traffic light derby.

It's also a bit of a stealth machine. I certainly don't see many of them in my motorcycling circles.

So I wasn't too surprised that there were none in the show and shine at

the re-opening of the new Gold Coast Morgan & Wacker Harley-Davidson shop late last year.

I was about to put on my lab coat and start inspecting the bikes in my capacity as guest judge when I noticed there was a 'V-Rod' sign with no bikes parked behind it.

But at the last minute a couple of fit young guys with muscles on their muscles paraded in on a Night Rod and an apologetically named Muscle.

Out of more than 100 bikes, there were only two V-Rods. It confirmed my suspicion that the V-Rod was an unloved member of the Harley family.



It had been that way since the V-Rod was born in 2001 in a dodgy and short-lived marriage between the Milwaukee manufacturer and Porsche of Stuttgart.

The Harley faithful never really accepted it as a true Hog because of its water-cooling.

Maybe that's a thing of the past now with the partial water-cooling in the new Ultra and the water-cooled Street family.

So it came as a massive surprise when the new boss of Harley-Davidson Australia and New Zealand, Nigel Keough, fronted the media for the first time at the annual HOG Rally in Tamworth earlier this year and told us

the V-Rod was the second best-selling family behind the Softails.

What the ...?

Could have fooled me. I have hardly seen any in my travels and there were very few at the HOG Rally.

Of course, they're not really a tourer, so that's probably one reason.

Then I had a look at the official industry sales stats. The Night Rod is the fourth-best-selling cruiser on the market and the third-best-selling Harley.

Despite there only being two models in the family, the V-Rod seems to hold some sort of fascination for Aussies.

Maybe they're being bought by

muscled-up young fellas who believe an R1 is just too pussy for them. I don't hang out with these guys, so that's probably another reason I don't see many of them.

It had been nearly five years since I'd ridden and tested a V-Rod so was about time I reacquainted myself with the bike.

Before I took the key from Morgan & Wacker GM Paul Lewis, I reminded myself of my previous review comments: "a rare treat," I had said. "The power and spirit of this bike are addictive and test riders should be wary of being hooked at first ride."

So I was fairly champing at the bit to throw a leg over it.



As he handed me the keys, Paul cracked a couple of jokes about “one down, four up” which reminded me it only has five gears and advised me to “use the back brake to turn”.

With that thought in the back of my mind, I gently rumbled out of the driveway onto Ross Street and could already feel much of the 113Nm of torque from the rubber-mounted 1247cc V-twin pulling at my knuckles.

So I did what any responsible citizen with a high-powered weapon would do ... I discharged it in public!

The 240mm back tyre bit hard without a squeal of protest and flung me back into

the deeply dished seat. My knuckles went white and my pupils dilated as I hurtled down the street towards the stop sign.

I grabbed four fingers and a Thomas Cook bootful of brakes and again the Michelin Scorchers rubber bit into the tarmac.

A rare treat, indeed. I was right. The power and spirit of this bike IS addictive.

The rest of the way home was simply a blur of traffic-light derbies and roll-on acceleration tests.

There was also that startling moment in a roundabout where I wound on the throttle and the bike stood up and wanted to fire me into the roadside furniture.

And that's where Paul's words came

back to me: “Use the back brake to turn”.

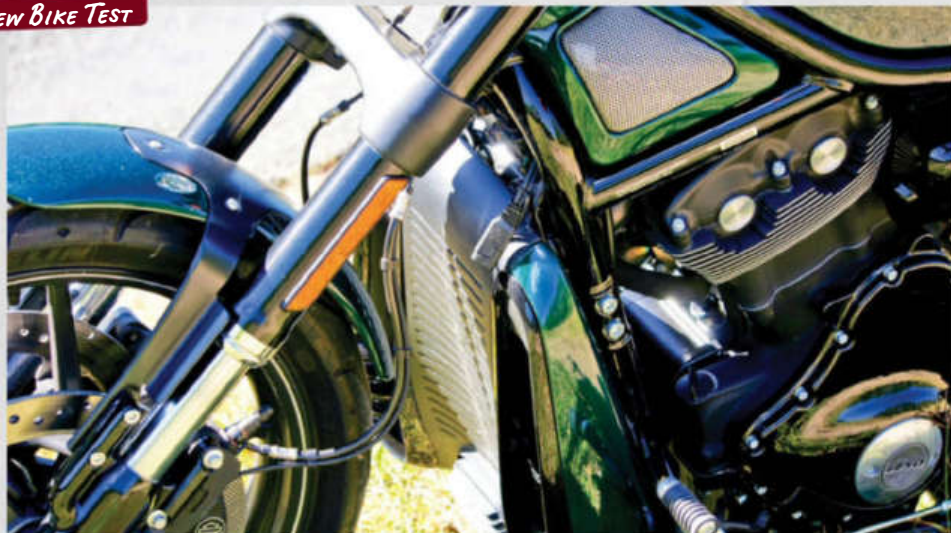
So I did, and it sat back down and leaned into the turn. It was a practice I got used to in the following two weeks with the Night Rod.

But a little history lesson first.

The V-Rod was born in 2001 with a V-twin Revolution heart that was developed jointly by HD and Porsche.

It was the first time Harley used liquid-cooling and overhead cams. In another twist to the traditional, the fuel tank is under the seat, allowing for a very sleek fake “tank”.

No wonder the faithful had a hard time accepting it.



GRINS

Menacing looks
Brutal acceleration and stopping power

GRIPES

Small pillion seat
Non-lockable fuel tank
Headlight spread

In the intervening years, there have been few styling changes or extra models. There were the standard A and B models, the Night Rod, Muscle, a couple of CVOs; a Destroyer drag-only bike, 10th anniversary models and the short-lived Street Rod with mid-mount pegs.

However, there have been significant changes in the basics: an increase in engine capacity from 1130cc to 1247cc, a bigger rear tyre (from 180 to 240mm), larger fuel tank (from 14L to 18.9L), inverted forks, LED tail-light, a slipper clutch and ABS.

The rest of the changes have been minor cosmetics.

If it's cosmetics you want, go away. The Night Rod Special doesn't wear any make-up.

It's the black sheep of the family with its blacked-out engine, black bars and wheels and matt-silver twin bazooka silencers.

My test bike was painted a lustrously deep British Racing Green with twin black stripes down the tank, kind of like some reptilian dinosaur.

The last time I rode a V-Rod nearly five years ago, the Night Rod Special cost \$25,995 and the Muscle was \$26,495. Today the Night Rod only costs \$1000 more and the Muscle an extra \$255.

Back on the road, I can't believe how much fun I'm having on this low-flying missile.

However, on the very first traffic-light derby I am wishing the bars didn't slope back at a 30-degree angle as it's difficult to hold on. A T-bar with straighter drag bars would be better. Either that or some Velcro on the palms of my gloves!

But the city limits aren't the boundary for the V-Rod. I took it out on some B-grade country roads with all the

blemishes we've come to accept and I was pleasantly surprised at how it rides and handles.

There may be only 74mm of travel in the rear preload adjustable shock and a low, 40 per cent aspect-ratio tyre, but it actually copes quite well with the bumps.

Up front is pretty good too as there is no uncomfortable jackhammer effect through the bars over high-frequency stutters.

Don't get me wrong; this is a stiff and taut machine with a fairly unforgiving ride, but it's not the bone-jarring, teeth-chattering experience I had expected.

Over a long, tank-draining 300km romp through the hills, I found I was still quite relaxed and comfortable in one of the plushest yet supportive seats on any cruiser.

The way it drops down and swoops up behind you nicely cossets your backside and there is even lumbar support for those of us with creaking lower backs.

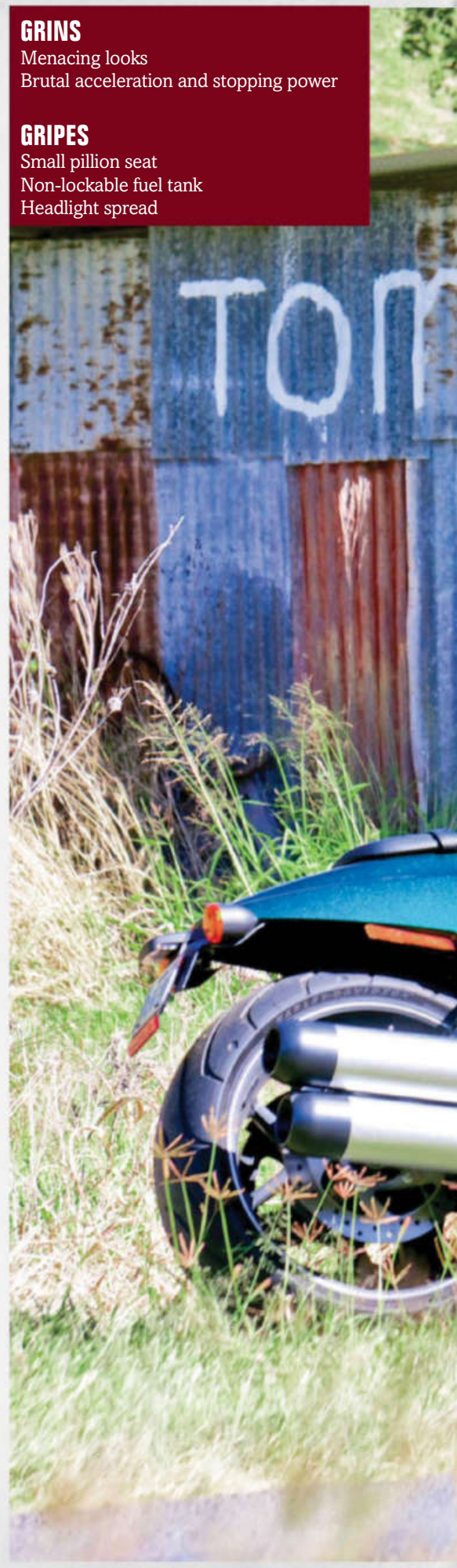
It's not the most relaxed riding position as you have your feet and hands forward in that windsock pose with no wind protection, so you've got to hang on at highway speeds.

Yet it's still good for a few hundred kilometres at a time and I'm surprised I haven't seen more people touring on them.

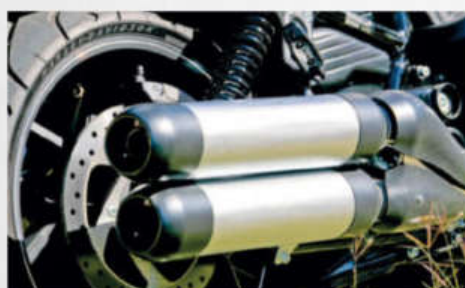
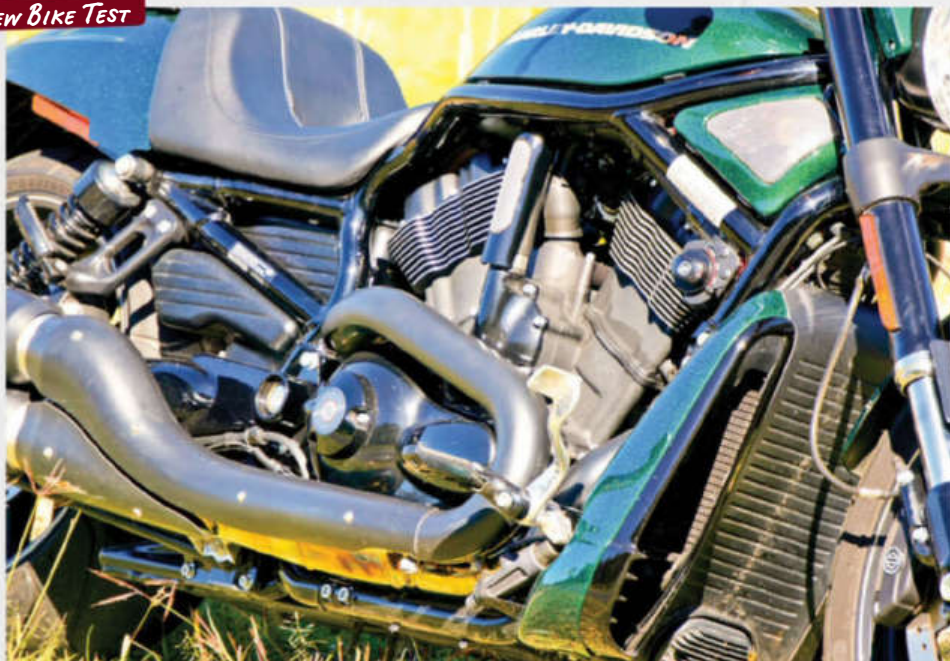
Only the very tough seem to do that. I recall meeting a couple of blokes at Windorah on their way to the Birdsville Races. One was on a Fat Boy and the other on a V-Rod. I was amazed and overawed to see they made it down 350km of gnarly dirt road to the races the next day.

You can get small panniers for the V-Rod so moderate touring isn't out of the question, although a bigger back seat to lash a swag over would be nice.

That seat also rules out two-up riding,







Pedal feel is sensitive enough to be able to trail the brake, which is a must for holding a lean angle and preventing that fat, car-sized tyre from standing the bike up.

Speaking of which, tyre pressures are paramount in getting the best handling out of the bike. Make sure they are pumped up to the maximum recommended levels or it really will feel quite dead in the rear end on cornering.

Surprisingly with a 34-degree rake, the bike turns quite positively into a corner. It doesn't drop in like a sportsbike but it's nimble enough, probably thanks to the inverted forks and lighter wheels.

It's when you're into a corner that you have to inject a little effort to keep it on line.

Cruiser riders will be surprised at the 32-degree lean angles allowed by the bike despite the forward controls. You really have to be running that 240mm Scorchers on the absolute edge before the pegs start kissing the tarmac.

A few years ago the pegs were lifted and pulled a little closer to help clearance angles. Not so much that you would notice a major change in comfort but it's obvious when you have it cranked over in a corner.

And mid-corner bumps won't suddenly dig the pegs into the asphalt because of the stiff frame and suspension. No wallowing here, just a bump and a short squirm.

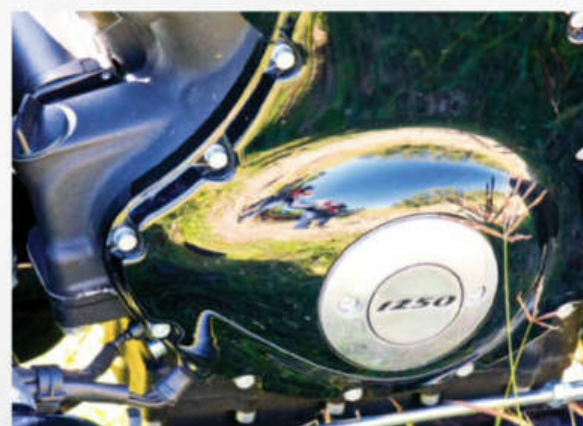
Our test bike came with standard pipes, which together with the carbon-fibre belt drive make it a very quiet ride. Most people will swap the mufflers out for something with a fruitier tone, but they will drown out an even sweeter soundtrack.

It's the 'drdrdr' induction noise it makes when accelerating hard. It's somewhere between the sound you make with your tongue on the roof of your mouth and the noise of a hammer drill. I love it and found myself becoming addicted to that awesome sucking music.

Despite its name, the Night Rod isn't particularly good in the dark with a yellow glowing headlight that is a little patchy in its spread and short in distance.

Yet this is where you are likely to find it, prowling the city streets at night, looking for prey to devour at the next set of traffic lights.

It's a shame as the lustrous paintwork can only be appreciated in direct sun and the bike really does have the ability to ride far beyond the city limits.





IF IT WERE MY BIKE WHAT I WOULD CHANGE ...

T-shaped drag bars.

QUICKSPECS

Model: Harley-Davidson Night Rod Special VRSCDX

Price: \$26,995 (Ride away)

Engine: Liquid-cooled, 60° V-twin 4-stroke with 4 valves per cylinder H-D speak: 'Revolution'

Bore x stroke: 105 x 72mm

Displacement: 1247cc or 76ci

Compression: 11.5:1

Power: 92kW (123hp) @ 8000rpm

Torque: 113Nm (83ft/lb) @ 6750rpm

Transmission: 5-speed, wet multi-plate clutch, belt final drive

Suspension: F: 43mm telescopic forks.

R: Twin shocks, preload adjustable

Brakes: ABS F: Twin rotors with four-piston calipers.

R: Single rotor with four-piston caliper

Tyres: Michelin Scorchers F: 120/70ZR19 R: 240/40R18

Frame: Tubular cradle

Seat height: 675mm

Wheelbase: 1705mm

Length: 2440mm

Weight: 302kg (wet)

Fuel capacity: 18.9 litres

Warranty: 2 years, unlimited distance

Servicing intervals: 8000km or 12 months

2015 YAMAHA STRYKER BULLET COWL

TOUGHER LOOK FOR OFF-THE-RACK
CUSTOM MID-WEIGHT.





Yamaha Motors Australia's new Stryker Bullet Cowl features changes that bring a tougher look and excellent wind protection to the popular liquid-cooled mid-weight V-twin.

Already offering more classic custom chopper styling than any other offering from Yamaha, the cowl adds to the look.



BREAKING COVER

The gutsy 1304cc, fuel-injected liquid-cooled V-twin engine made us smile when we first rode a Stryker and this revision offers the same driveline package.

With its radically raked-out front end offering a total of 40 degrees' rake, you could be excused for thinking that the Stryker loves straight roads and detests being asked to change direction. When we originally tested one in *C&T* 6.4, Mick

said "There was no tracking but it changed direction when told to." Best of both worlds? Sure sounds like it.

The low seat height (670mm) allows any rider to put both feet on the ground. Surprisingly, the reach from seat to pegs and bars has proven to be comfortable for shorter riders as well as six-footers.

Yamaha has put its effort into making the Stryker a premium product. A good example of this is

the use of steel mudguards rather than cheaper plastic. There's belt final drive, and slimline LED blinkers on the new model as well. Little touches but they all add up.

A point we forgot to mention in the original test is that all genuine Yamaha accessory parts fitted at time of purchase are also covered by the five-year extended factory warranty.

This version is Camo Green and is priced at \$15,599. Go and have a look.

QUICKSPECS

Model: Yamaha Stryker Bullet Cowl

Price: \$15,599 (Camo Green)

Engine: Liquid-cooled 60° OHC V-twin, 4 valves per cylinder, dual counter-balancers

Bore x stroke: 100.0 x 83.0mm

Displacement: 1304cc or 80ci

Compression: 9.5:1

Power: 52.4kW @ 5500rpm

Torque: 106Nm @ 4000rpm

Transmission: 5-speed, wet multi-plate clutch, belt final drive

Suspension: F: 41mm Telescopic forks, 135mm travel. R: Swingarm, 100mm travel

Brakes: F: Single 320mm rotor with four-piston caliper. R: Single 310mm rotor with twin-piston caliper.

Tyres: F: 120/70-21 R: 210/40R18

Frame: Tubular double cradle

Seat Height: 668mm

Wheelbase: 1750mm

Length: 2530mm

Weight: 293kg (wet)

Fuel capacity: 15 litres

Warranty: 5 years, unlimited distance

Servicing intervals: 10,000km or 12 months



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A DAY IN THE SADDLE

IN QUEENSLAND, HERVEY BAY IS CLAIMED TO BE A BIG RETIREMENT VILLAGE. WAS THIS REALLY A SECRET RETIREMENT-PLANNING TRIP?

Words & Photos: Mark Hinchliffe









There's a different dynamic to a day in the saddle when the womenfolk come along.

The chatter over lattes is a little gentler, the toilet stops a little longer, the pace a little slower, the language a little less colourful and the meal venues a little classier.

For this genteel ride to 'God's waiting room' at Hervey Bay, I'm mounted on the very refined and attractive Indian Chief Vintage in Indian red with tan leather upholstery. I'm sitting pretty and the envy of those with whom I'm riding.

It's a mishmash of bike styles on this ride – two sports tourers, five adventure bikes, a GoldWing and the Chief – and I'm more than a little concerned as we head out of BrisVegas that we won't all agree on the route and the pace.

I'm riding with all the adventure bikes on the first leg, which also has me a little concerned about their choice of roads.

But two of the 1200cc chook chasers have husband-and-wife teams on board who say they don't do dirt roads, instead enjoying their bikes' plush suspension on our poorly surfaced black top.

Maybe they should try riding the Chief, which not only has plush suspension but a much more comfortable pillion seat. Yes,

I see the glint in the ladies' eyes as they admire my rear end ... I mean the Indian's rear end!

I'm riding over the biggest of bumps up the shoddily maintained Brisbane Valley Highway and not feeling any pain. It's certainly a plush and luxurious ride among the cattle farms and market gardens through the Brisbane Valley that's looking lush after unseasonal autumn rains.

It's been a couple of years since I've ridden up the attractively named Blackbutt Range and the last time it was nearing the completion of major roadworks that were turning the ascent into a reverse replica of the Laguna Seca corkscrew.

I remember being concerned that they'd spend millions on the road and leave the speed limit at 60km/h. I was right! Even at 80km/h it would be safe for the most stringent road safety super nanny.

We all edge faster and faster, and eventually eschew the posted speed for a safe and glorious romp up the beautifully smooth and swerving tarmac.

This May morning the temperatures are starting to get a little crisp for we Queenslanders and at the top, the temp gauge on the Vintage dips into the low teens.

I slump down a little behind that big Chief windscreen and cut all the wind chill

and buffeting. It's a cosy place to be in my lounge-chair ride and I'm relishing the big-hearted pull of the 111 Thunder Stroke V-twin on the steep ascent.

But I'm not enjoying the thump from the stage-one mufflers. It's reverberating in my full-face helmet and starting to give me a headache. I open the visor and the noise is slightly less droning but it's a constant headache on this trip.

It's only a couple of days later when I ride the bike again while wearing an open-face helmet that I find the noise doesn't offend.

On through Nanango we pay only passing attention to Hannibal's Bucket, a large mining machine bucket on display from the nearby Tarong mine, and consider stopping for a sample from the selection of nuts at the famous peanut van.

However, we're meeting up at Goomeri in the South Burnett with another bunch of riders coming from the Sunshine Coast and they've just called me on my Bluetooth to find out how long we'll be, so there's no stopping in Nanango.

At Goomeri we top up the tanks and the tummies as we catch up with old friends. It's sometimes difficult getting back on the road again after a coffee stop where you have so many stories to share, so the break stretches and stretches.

The next leg of our journey north follows the Burnett Highway to Ban Ban Springs, then takes a right hook to Biggenden, up the Isis Highway to Childers, then southeast to Hervey Bay.

Maryborough and Hervey Bay were the joint locations of the 2013 Ulysses AGM and to most Queenslanders it seemed like a pretty dumb idea. It certainly isn't a region high on the list of motorcycle destinations.

Unless you take the Bruce Highway, there are very few options in and out. But we're planning to avoid the boring Bruce as much as possible by looping west and north on the way in and cutting straight south on the way out.

The scenery is better, the traffic much lighter and the police patrols are scant, so we're not mindlessly gazing at our speedos the whole way.

The final few kilometres sprinting into Childers features a couple of range crossings with those tell-tale motorcycle crash zone warning signs. You know you are in for some entertaining roads when you see them.

The Chief Vintage's floorboards lay down

some nice grooves through the smooth and well-banked corners, the others only dreaming of staying in touch with my pace. Granted, three pilots have their 'human handbrakes' on board to slow them down!

First stop at Childers for anyone passing through town is the Mammino ice creamery that is conveniently located where the Isis Highway spills into the main street, which is also the Bruce Highway.

I know it's ice cream before lunch, but any time is a good time for a delicious Mammino ice cream.

Tastebuds satisfied, we head south through town and turn up Goodwood Rd towards Woodgate to have lunch at the Ohana Winery where a big cheese platter lunch is only \$9.

Service is a little slow because it's Monday and they've suddenly been besieged by a dozen weary riders, but the food is excellent and the attentive and attractive young waitress is swooning over my mount, so I forgive them.

Over lunch I've been answering a lot of questions about the Chief. Everyone loves the attractive Indian.

But I'm starting to notice some other fine details I'd not seen before, despite having ridden the whole range on several occasions.

One of those fine details is the little bar across the filler neck to prevent putting the fuel pump nozzle in too far. It means you fill until the pump clicks off and that's about where you should leave it. No guessing how much fuel to dribble in. It's simple but clever attention to detail like this that makes the Indian experience so satisfying.

Up until now, it's been a relaxed and picturesque ride, staying off the main highway and sticking to the lonely country byways. However, now there's no escaping this next section of the Bruce Highway.

We only have a short 15-minute run down the highway to Howard, but even that is plagued by bumpy surfaces, too many caravans, slow-moving trucks and the ever-present worry of highway patrols and speed cameras.

Thankfully, we exit the highway at Howard and start ducking and weaving through the low, swampy coastal scrub with a quick detour to check out the charming fishing village of Burrum Heads before



riding on to the sprawling retirement village that is Hervey Bay.

Our accommodation is booked down on Charlton Esplanade, which runs by the beach overlooking the calm waters out towards Fraser Island.

What could have been a boring 300km trip up the highway has instead been a 500km all-day ride through some interesting and entertaining scenery and roads. The three female pillions have entertained us and slowed us down a bit which is fine as we've had more time to catch up with old friends and enjoy the picturesque countryside.

We're all feeling a little weary now and ready for a few beers as we watch the sun melt into the beach horizon.

But the best-laid plans suddenly unravel when we reach our accommodation. I'd booked ahead for four double rooms and told the hotel receptionist we may need five or even six rooms, depending on how many wives show up at the last minute.

The receptionist told me they had very few bookings and it wouldn't be a problem. He had my mobile number and promised to ring me if they got any more bookings.

So I hadn't worried about our late arrival or ringing ahead to tell them we'd actually need six rooms. However, instead of ringing me, they greedily took four more bookings and didn't have enough rooms for us all.

Rather than being spread across two motels, we quickly found plenty of clean budget accommodation nearby at the Shelley Beach Motel with its large backyard, undercover parking, hose to clean our bikes off and a covered barbecue area where we could have a few beverages.

It's a bit far from the restaurants, most of which were closed anyway on a Monday night, but the good old RSL courtesy bus came to our rescue. Where else would we eat, anyway, in God's waiting room?

The next morning we are surprised by quick service at the Bayaroma Cafe despite their being swamped with a dozen slightly hungover riders needing a caffeine fix.

Our route home again avoids the Bruce Highway by turning south at Maryborough on the Cooloola Coast Rd with a short bypass to the quaint fishing village of Boonooroo – avoid it at sunset unless you have plenty of Aerogard.





Watch out for wild brumbies on this road that cuts through the pine plantations on the coastal flats.

We turn back in towards Gympie where we say goodbye to the Sunny Coast contingent and head down the Mary River Rd through Kenilworth over the Blackall Range to Woodford, then over Mt Mee and back into Brisbane, a scenic and challenging route all the way.

Don't get me wrong; there are plenty of reasons to visit the region with its proximity to Fraser Island, excellent fishing, whale

watching, lovely seaside scenery and a host of festivals and special events such as the Relish Food and Wine Festival and the PubFest, both in June; Love Mary Day (a celebration of the fact that the creator of Mary Poppins, P L Travers, was born here) in May; the Seafood Festival in August and Picnic Races in October in nearby Torbanlea.

And ever since the Ulysses rally, the good folk of Maryborough and Hervey Bay seem to welcome any biker with open arms.

Just make sure you stay off the Bruce Highway.



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HARLEY-DAVIDSON ROAD GLIDE TRIKE

This is the first time we've featured any bike or trike twice! Paul's HD Road Glide Custom was on the cover of C&T 5.3 when it was a solo. Now it's a trike and he still loves it.



Words: Paul Bailey Photos: Tim Munro

Trikes are curious things. They are a combination of a motorcycle and something else, not quite car, not quite hot rod, not quite sports car. But they have a place in the motoring world and are a practical and viable commercial vehicle.

I've been a motorcyclist since I was 10. I'm now 57 and have never in the past 47 years been without a motorcycle, so motorcycling is a very big part of my life, not just as a hobbyist but as a profession also. Through a combination of magazine contributions and regular columns, managing the motorcycle ride days at Sydney Motorsport Park and freelance work with Harley-Davidson Australia, I have a very big involvement in motorcycling.

I have owned trikes in the past. I'm a tinkerer, builder and modifier of all things mechanical, including motorcycles. I have owned a 1972 Harley-Davidson Servi Car – a 750cc side-valve engine in a rigid trike frame that I customised back in the early 90s. Interestingly, the trike is still getting around. I saw it recently on the Princes Highway at Tempe and it still looked good. I also built a custom trike based on a Honda VFR1000 (VTR1000? VFR800?) that had A-frame rear suspension, basically a widened swingarm to give the A-frame look with a chain-drive Harley diff and axle assembly. The bodywork was all aluminium and designed by me as a giant streamlined wing that created downforce as you went faster. It was a lot of fun.

Each of these trikes though had limitations in what they did. The biggest issue with both was the lack of practical rear suspension that could be compliant enough to aid in the ride and handling. The ultimate rear suspension for a trike is a fully independent system.

In 1983 I was run over by a Chevy C10 truck while riding my motorcycle. The consequences of that collision are still with me today: eight arthroscopies, two tissue transplants and two bone grafts later I have a workable leg and knee but have serious strength issues with my right leg. A knee replacement (which would have helped a great deal) was on the cards in 2013 but, out of the blue I was diagnosed with leukaemia – acute myeloid lymphoma, to be precise. So nine months of chemotherapy was the solution. I'm in remission and doing great 18 months after finishing the chemo but I found I







was having major problems holding up my Road Glide Custom when travelling with my wife. It was becoming a serious issue two-up and with gear, I just couldn't hold the bike if it started to lean or fall to the right. Most embarrassing, I must say. It was also creating tension for my wife Lynda who was becoming more and more anxious about riding.

I own other solo motorcycles and they are all fine at this time with regards to balance and my ability to manoeuvre them when stopped; it's just the big Harley that was getting me into trouble.

I had always known in the back of my

mind that, one day, making the move onto a trike would be the only way to continue my riding. The fact that it has happened earlier than planned is not an issue; the important thing was to be able to keep riding two-up and to keep travelling on a motorcycle.

So these are not excuses but more my reasons and motivation to become a trike owner again. My reasons will be different to others' but, if it means that we can continue to feel and breathe life from the seat of a motorcycle, then it's fine with me if there is an extra wheel.

I took the time to ride a number of trikes of different origins, from those with two

wheels at the front (not sure if you can really call Spyders trikes) to those with car engines out the back, and even the factory Harley trike.

I wanted to stick to Harley but I wanted better than the company had to offer: I wanted independent rear suspension. There are a number of companies that offer trike conversion kits for your bike, whether it be a Harley or something else; in fact most suppliers cater for most brands.

The company that I finally went for was Motor Trike, based in Texas, USA, which has a very impressive fleet of kits to choose from. The local Australian



distributor is Threedom Wheels, based near Cessnock (Gateshead) and are on the web if you want to have a look at what they do. I have a friend who has one of their kits fitted to his Harley Ultra and it was exactly what I was after.

I made the trip up to see Hilton, the owner of Threedom Wheels. He is a very accomplished builder and has a very impressive full-timer business converting customers' bikes into trikes. He does do other brands of trike kits, but my research showed that the Motor Trike kit was the one for me. I settled for the Gladiator version. This has a fully independent rear with gas

coil-over shocks, sway bar and secondary airbag suspension (with a built-in compressor) for varied loads. A kit giving the forks an extra six degrees of rake is also included in the kit, as is a handbrake and disc brakes with ABS. I also opted for the electric reverse kit. Once all the options were decided upon, the kit was ordered from Motor Trike. The Texas outfit builds its kits as they are ordered. They are robotically welded and painted to match the OEM colours of your bike. About six weeks later your trike kit is delivered, and Hilton then spends about 10 days fitting the kit to your motorcycle.

It's fundamental to the whole process that the kit requires no welding to the original bike chassis; it's all bolt-on and the original final drive is retained. When completed, the trike is taken on a 200km shakedown run to the mechanical engineer who gives it the once-over with a report then issued. From that point, the trike is registered with the RMS in New South Wales as a modified solo/trike and an engineer's report is attached. Perfect! Everything is done for you, and it couldn't be any easier.

OK, HOW DOES IT RIDE?

Fantastic is the first word that comes to mind. The good quality of the build is everywhere, from the seamless and perfect paint finish to the fitting of all the controls and components. To ride it is dead simple: all you need to adjust to is that the bike no longer needs to be leaned into corners. Instead, you offer a little input to the 'bars, push on the left bar to go right and push on the right bar to go left, opposite to what we do on a solo, but it all feels so natural within a few kilometres of riding. The extra rake of the forks controls the possible head shake that can occur with the standard rake. Harley fits a steering damper rather than rake the forks, but I feel that's more about keeping their trike and solo range the same in all the details.

The BIG factor is the rear suspension which, being fully independent, allows each rear wheel to act separately from the other, so imperfections in the road that can upset lesser suspensions are absorbed in the Motor Trike system.

The whole rear end can be adjusted for any road conditions and for any load conditions. The gas shocks have five

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preload adjustments, which I've settled on #3 to give a very plush ride solo. To adjust the air pressure and preload for a pillion, pillion and gear or even for a trailer is a simple push-button affair with the airbag assist system. You can go as high as 70psi.

The upper and lower control arms of the suspension are unequal in their length. This eliminates roll-out of the wheels, which simply means that the outside wheel in turns is always making full contact with the road, a clever but very important aspect of the suspension. There is also a sway bar to help with body roll. The rear disc brakes have park brake drums built into them, so both rear wheels are locked when the park brake is applied. The all-

alloy calipers are a three-piston design that offers great feel and power. The rear brakes are also linked to the stock Harley ABS system.

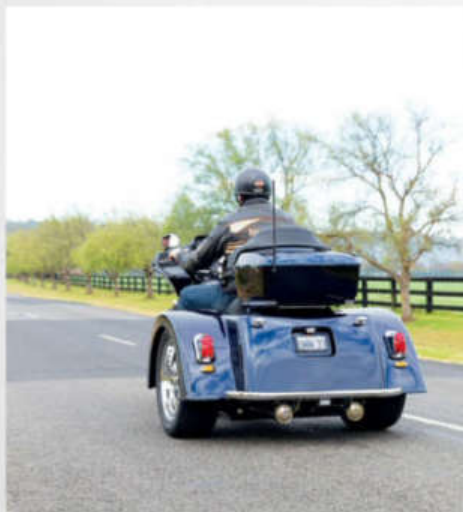
With the trike in neutral, reverse gear is engaged by pressing a toggle switch until an indicator light comes on, then press and hold the horn and start buttons to make the trike reverse. Once you've finished reversing, press the toggle switch again to disarm the reverse function and you're back to normal.

Carrying capacity is increased over the solo Road Glide with a massive boot area. Then there's the Tour Pak, which doubles as an armchair for your pillion and is also impressive in its capacity.

BENEFITS OF THIS TRIKE

Load and storage capacity is far superior to the solo motorcycle. The fact that you never have to put your foot down when you come to a stop is so comforting for those of us with strength issues. It's helpful too that the trike can never slide out from under you because of bad roads, bad braking or any other cause that might result in dropping a solo. You never again need to have concerns about rain or diesel spills. Also, you can stop worrying about braking too hard. Apart from the safety of ABS, the trike can never fall over or crash due to over-braking and losing the front or rear wheel.

The kit can be tailored to suit your



tastes and choices, but to attempt to build one yourself would be far more expensive. The build quality, paint and technical specifications would be hard to match. But the biggest thing is that it is all pre-approved with the NSW RMS and there are no issues with the engineer's report or registration.

It's well worth the money in my opinion.

DISADVANTAGES

Lane splitting is now a thing of the past; leaning a motorcycle is now no longer a fun factor; losing your voice through the sheer number of people wanting to talk to you when all you want to do is get a coffee.

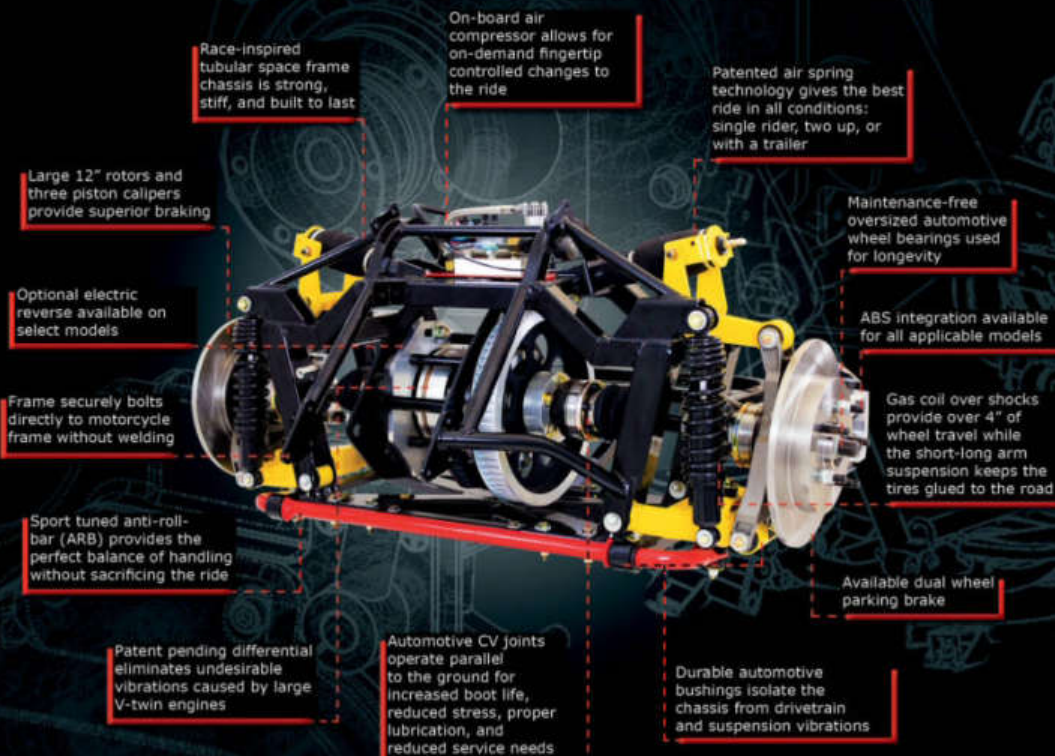
CONCLUSION

As you'll understand by now, I am the very proud owner of a Harley-Davidson Trike. I'm totally enjoying the experience but, more importantly for me, so is my wife Lynda. We are enjoying our two-up riding with none of the problems we had with the solo bike, clocking up kilometres and enjoying our touring life again.

Maybe you're like me and have injuries that limit your solo riding; perhaps you want to tow a trailer safely; or perhaps it's just the years catching up with you. Whatever the reason, your riding years can certainly be extended far into the future with a trike. Happy wife – happy life.

INDEPENDENT REAR SUSPENSION

Motor Trike's independent rear suspension offers unrivaled performance. The IRS is key to the ride quality because it allows each wheel to address the road undisturbed by activities of the opposing wheel. Motor Trike's world class engineering sets their design apart from all the rest.



Typical view of belt drive suspension shown above. Some features vary by model.

Yes, Two Does Go Into Three

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Cruiser & Trike



MOTO GUZZI V7 STONE

THINK OF THE V7 STONE AS A
BLANK CANVAS READY TO FINISH
OFF TO SUIT YOU!



Words: Tim Sanford

Photos: Tim Munro

The story so far with Moto Guzzi is that we've tested several models and all have been impressive machines. The big cruiser/tourer models have been especially good and the rides they've provided have been in the brilliant department, no question about that. This V7 Stone is a very different motorcycle to the previous big bikes but it shares many of their good qualities.

The bike fits very neatly into two significant market niches: the retro look and the basic bike style. At a mere 177kg it is a light ride and with power and torque figures of 50 horses and 60Nm it comes as a surprise that it is not LAMS approved. Perhaps that will come. At \$14k ride away I think it's very good value indeed.

Take a look at it. Total blackout is the look with some eye relief provided by the upswept chrome of the mufflers, but that's about it. All the black bits are a sort of matt or satin finish and I reckon it looks really good in the metal. If you must have a dash of colour you can



order it with a red tank, which comes with the wonderful Italian name of Rosso Impetuoso. And in that name lies something of the bike's character: riding it during the test I likened it to a well-trained young dog, one that does what it's told but always has a streak of puppy frolic just waiting to burst out and have some fun.

While I'm in the mood for some interesting images of the bike (as if happy puppy isn't enough?) I reckon that the view from the front – where you can see the cylinder heads sticking out into the wind – reminds me of those old steam engines where the driver had to stick his head out

the side to see where he was going.

Back in the 'real world' the bike feels small and nimble. It fitted my frame wonderfully and a full day in the saddle was no chore at all. Initially the seat felt like a wooden bench but it was only towards the end of a long day that my bum decided it would like to stop soon. The lack of soft padding means that the seat doesn't wrap itself around your softer parts and thereby cut off the blood flow, which is the principal cause of the dreaded numb bum. The seat is set at 790mm from the ground, which is quite tall; but with its light weight the bike is dead easy to move around. My comments



on the side stand are not so flattering: To me it was in a strange position and initially it was very stiff to use, but a squirt of oil helped that. It is very short, which means it's not that easy to reach and it also means that you need to be careful where you park it. Park on a slope to the left means making sure it won't topple over. The side stand does work the engine cutout so that's a good thing.

Sitting on the bike, the tank looks tall and narrow. Some of that's an illusion because it holds 21 litres with four of those being reserve. On my test the bike covered around 20km for each litre with frugal use. Thrash it and you'll probably



only get that figure down to, say, 15km/litre. With that tank size it will go a long way between servos. The satin finish on the tank meant that a suction cap tankbag won't work but the tank is made of steel so if you want to carry stuff you'll need to go magnetic for the bag. The pillion seat is wide (and hard like the rider's) and

it offers plenty of space to strap a seat bag or tie stuff down with those modern elasticated Andy Strapz.

Your view to the front sees the speedo mounted high on the bars and that keeps it in easy view. The warning lights are nice and bright and the repeater light for the indicators is right at the top so



you really don't have any excuse for leaving the indicators on. The indicators themselves are typically Italian in style but they are bright and easy to see. Within the speedo there is a digital readout that can be toggled between readings; the left one will tell you total odometer or the trip (only one trip) while the right one will give either the time of day or the air temperature. When the bike is switched back on after a stop the digital readout always defaulted to odometer and time. For some silly reason I found this irksome because I always want to know the trip distance when I'm on a ride and because it was freezing during my test, knowing how cold it was seemed important. Overall it's not a big issue, is it?

Are we riding it yet? Let's go! Always easy to start, the relatively small



GRINS

Superbly integrated and lots of fun to ride.

GRIPES

Narrow mirrors, and the digital readout default was irksome

transverse V-twin has a nice throb at idle and there is a real motorcycle noise coming from the pipes. Easing in the clutch makes you realise that down below there's a big single-plate clutch and that makes the lever pull significant. If you have a small hand you may find the clutch a bit hard. In action however it is great and that, coupled to the truly excellent gearbox, makes gear shifting an absolute delight. The lever is nice too with its partner on the brake side made with much the same sweep, in brushed alloy. A small detail perhaps, but typically Italian in style. I liked them.

Off idle there is a very slight hesitation from the engine management and this, coupled to the fact that there is no enormous low-down V-twin torque, had me in the embarrassing situation of the



occasional stall. As an owner I think you'd soon get quite accustomed to giving the bike a bit more throttle on take off so you'd never look like an idiot and stall it. Sigh.

Once the bike is rolling there is plenty of power. It's the sort of power that is enough to make the bike enormous fun to ride without you ever feeling that there will be a licence loss in the process. That said, I couldn't resist the fun that came with giving the bike lots of throttle and letting it spin up through the rev range with that beautiful note rumbling away behind me. Once again it's loud enough to enjoy but not so brazen that it annoys.

To go with the firm seat the suspension setting was on the firm side as well. A search through the bike's cavities found a small tool kit containing two Allen keys that didn't fit very many bolts on the bike, a Phillips head screwdriver that worked on the switch blocks, and that was about it. No C-spanner to adjust the rear shocks. That was sad but I like a firm ride so it was no big deal. I wonder if the spanner should be there but had been lost?

Because the bike is nimble, very well balanced and slim, it deals with traffic really well. Threading through the cars was just so easy and then when the lights went green it just powered away with no fuss. I very quickly worked out that this was a motorcycle I was going to enjoy riding very much. The bike has an incredibly integrated feel to it and that not only adds to the ease of riding it when you want to do a commuter run, but it also makes you want to get out of the snarl and into the countryside. Bend-swinging ability? What do you reckon, it being a Moto Guzzi with all that heritage? The bike lives up to its pedigree and as the corners flashed by there was that happy puppy again: so enthusiastic yet always letting you know that you were in complete control. Line up a corner and the bike tips in on the chosen line effortlessly and stays where you put it all the way through. With such precise steering I never had a moment's concern in corners even when they were quite bumpy – the bike simply romps through



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because that's one of the things it does best. Entering a hairpin bend at speed I had an instant's thought that the brakes, even though they're Brembos, are not very high spec but the available stopping power was more than up to the job. Okay, the pressure at the lever is higher than the single-finger requirement you'll find with the multi-piston calipers of the more illustrious members of the Brembo range but strong power was there and that's what matters. Oh, and when you need it there's ABS as well.

I found a couple of interesting points during the ride. There was an audible whine in third gear that was absent in the other gears, but the bike was not yet fully run in so that may well go away with use. On a bike that carries a price tag of just \$14k ride away (Moto Guzzi Australia website) I didn't expect to find heated handgrips but that didn't matter because even though the temperature during the

test was a touch above freezing, it was no problem when the bike was stationary in traffic to reach down and warm my hands on those big cylinder heads that so conveniently stick out for the purpose. They also kept my lower legs warm. Great things in winter, these transverse V-twins!

The list of things I was not happy with is short: the headlight is good on both beams but it needed to be set a bit higher. No big deal with the right tools to hand. The mirrors could have been a good bit wider because the view behind was a bit too full of my arms to be of much use. And that's about it.

If you want a bike that's going to perform a lot of riding duties very competently but is also full of fun when the mood takes you, this V7 Guzzi is right on the money. And as for value, the \$14k price tag is excellent.

If it were my motorcycle I'd give it better mirrors and keep it forever. 

IF IT WERE MY BIKE WHAT I WOULD CHANGE ...

The mirrors, and then keep it forever.



QUICKSPECS

Model: Moto Guzzi V7 Stone

Price: \$14,000 (Ride away)

Engine: Air-cooled, 90° V-twin OHV 4-stroke, 2 valves per cylinder

Bore x stroke: 80 x 74mm

Displacement: 744cc

Compression: 10.5:1

Power: 37kW (50hp) @ 6200rpm

Torque: 60Nm @ 2800rpm

Transmission: 6-speed, single-plate clutch, shaft final drive

Suspension: F: 40mm telescopic forks.

R: Cast alloy swingarm with twin shocks

Brakes: ABS F: 320mm rotor with radially-mounted four-piston Brembo caliper. R: 260mm rotor with floating Brembo two-piston caliper.

Tyres: F: 100/90-18 R: 130/80-17

Frame: Double cradle steel tubular frame

Seat height: 790mm

Length: 2185mm

Weight: 177kg (dry)

Fuel capacity: 21L including 4L reserve

Warranty: 2 years, unlimited distance

Servicing intervals: 10,000km or 12 months

A DAY IN THE SADDLE

We take it for granted that the Great Ocean Road is great. A Pomgolian tourist shares his thoughts on an Aussie icon.





Words & Photos: Stevie Jordan

You could forgive someone who had never ridden the Great Ocean Road for thinking that it sounds less than, well, great.

For a start there are the hordes of tourists who zigzag the route at precisely 27km/h, fixing their eyes on everything but the road itself. Then there are the coach drivers – who can be more erratic than a cat in a wet sack – herding yet more tourists in oversized, 18-tonne behemoths that simply aren't made for single lanes. If that's not enough, the locals all drive like they've just robbed the Bank of Melbourne. And then there are caravans, which need

no further elaboration.

Things get worse by Torquay, the eastern start of the Great Ocean Road, where the first ominous-looking road signs appear to remind tourists that we drive on the left in Australia. By Anglesea, just 20km further west, countless other cautions warn road users: 'Slippery When Wet', 'Rough Surface', 'Loose Chippings', 'Concealed Entrance', 'Stock Crossing', 'Wildlife Crossing', 'People Crossing'.

The list goes on and on. At face value, this is a stretch of bitumen that could give Bolivia's notorious North Yungus Road – the 'Death Road' – a run for its money.

However, all of the above would get

scrunched into a little ball and thrown out of the window (if bikes had windows) because however many giant reflective lollipops Vic Roads cements in the ground, there is absolutely no disguising that the clue is in the name; it's called the Great Ocean Road for very good reasons.

Discussing this with *C&T* Editor Mick Withers over an after-work rum, his response was simple. "I agree," he said. "Write a story that proves your point." As assignments go, this was going to be up there with the best of them. My kit was packed by the end of the night, so I can blame the rum for the fact that I didn't bring any spare socks.

Access to the B100 – as it's formally



known – follows a short hop along the M1 from Melbourne. For me, that meant the opportunity to acquaint myself with the Harley-Davidson FXDF Fat Bob I'd been armed with. Usually an urban street brawler, the Fat Bob seemed set to prove itself as more than capable of a mid-distance cruise. Needless to say, I was eagerly anticipating the coils of tarmac to come, despite all the previous caveats.

Bend after bend, the Great Ocean Road is a perfectly traced grey squiggle that initially stretches along the coast from Torquay (home of the world-famous surf hotspot, Bells Beach) to its midway point at the Otway Ranges. The route to this

point is split by the waterfront towns of Lorne and Apollo Bay, which both lie in the shadows of koala-filled gum trees. These towns offer the opportunity of a quick rest break with a number of amenities and fuel options before the B100 twists slightly north-west towards the Great Otway National Park. Ironically, it is away from the coast that the road comes into its own, with challenging apexes that cut through the forest here for 25km.

Make no mistake, the short distance (105km from Torquay to the Park) can take a couple of hours or more, depending on traffic, which can be arduous if slow-moving vehicles are out in force but — and

it's a big but — what a ride it is! This is a mouth-watering stretch of bitumen intent on offering those who challenge its apexes a sparring match of epic proportions.

With the Fat Bob tipping in keenly, I was 'in the zone' that only another rider can relate to. The Harley's Twin Cam 103 was providing a sweet 'thud-thud' soundtrack while the exhaust note was being boomed by a mix of surrounding trees and limestone cliff edges. Despite the questionable but typical Victorian temperature, there was plenty of grip in the rubber.

Torque is premium on this road unless you have a particular affinity to frequent,



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short-spaced gear changes, so the Fat Bob was in its element thanks to the grunt of acceleration on tap at the slightest twist of the throttle. Unfortunately, this wasn't so enjoyable for my passenger as the Fat Bob has a pillion seat that's harder than Arnie in *Predator*, so is not a two-up machine for any trip longer than the length of a standard driveway. If you do have someone on the back, chances are they'll be begging you to stop long before the fuel warning light glows, as consumption is good.

With every bend and turn — each varying in angle and camber — slicing through the hillside, the Fat Bob was soon edging me from the rainforest back towards the coast. A short diversion leads to Cape Otway, the second most southerly point of mainland Australia and the eastern end of the infamous

Shipwreck Coast. The area is also home to the country's oldest surviving lighthouse, which dates back to 1848.

Further west of the Otways is the town of Glenaire where the road returns inland and begins to climb Lavers Hill. Be warned, fog coming in from ocean thermals can linger in the area — providing evidence enough as to why more than 200 ships were sunk along the Shipwreck Coast in less than a century. The fog can bring another element of challenge to the B100's twists.

Another detour leads to Johanna where more world-class surf breaks can be found but the Fat Bob is more suited to riding the road than the waves so it was onwards, towards Princetown and the Port Campbell National Park. With dramatic cliffs that fall 70m to the ocean below, the landscape here offers a diverse change





of scene and is also home to the Great Ocean Road's pin-up girl. Also known as the Twelve Apostles (of which actually only seven stacks survive today, though this number can vary depending on your look-out point), these rock formations are a must for any itinerary. If that's not enough, there's also the Gibson Steps, cut into the limestone, that lead to feral Gibson Beach. A number of operators run helicopter rides to provide bird's-eye views of what is possibly one of the most beautiful parts of all Australia – as if the road to this point hasn't offered enough adrenalin.

There is a distinct natural beauty of

the landscape that borders the stretch of the road from here to the weather-bashed town of Port Campbell itself. With the temperature rising however, it was time for a quick dip in the bay — the area's only swimmer-friendly beach — before heading further west towards the Great Ocean Road's other tourist highlights. Sights including the Arch, London Bridge, the Grotto, and Bay of Islands mean it's slow going because you'll be stopping to marvel every few kilometres.

If you're strapped for time and decide against battling through the tourists at each of the stop-off points, a short walk



GRINS

Power, power and more power; brakes that would stop a stampeding rhino; ultra-cool styling; the comfortable fat-bottomed seat; and a riding position that lets you watch the front end working away

GRIPES

Tiny mirrors; a slightly awkward sidestand; and that pillion seat



from the car park at Peterborough leads to some spectacular vantage spots. It's worth pulling up regardless because not far from here is the official end of the Great Ocean Road before it joins the Princes Highway, some 10km outside Warrnambool.

Steeped in its whaling-station history, Warrnambool is a hub for the region that explodes with tourists in summer.

The areas around the town offer nice touring options including Tower Hill Wildlife Reserve, 5km west of town. Thanks to the Macphersons, our locally based friends who acted as the perfect hosts and tour guides, the town itself

proved its charm and was well worth the few hours it took to explore. Be sure to get pictures of the town's famous Dirty Angel statue that amusingly 'salutes' onlookers. If you don't get my drift (and aren't easily offended), Google the Dirty Angel Warrnambool. The town provides more than enough pubs to make your choice of drinking hole harder than it should be if you plan on staying the night. Mick also reckons the locals are friendly, especially for a bunch that live in a town of wind-driven horizontal rain.

Easily accessible from Warrnambool is the fishing township of Port Fairy, the most

westerly point of the Shipwreck Coast. While you're there, stop in and have a feed at The Stump, or as it's officially named, the Caledonian Inn. Established in 1844, this is the oldest licensed hotel in Victoria. Excellent food is complemented by a good variety of alcoholic offerings. Port Fairy is one of the last vestiges of civilisation along this passage in the state, but from here your route can continue to trace the coast towards Mount Gambier and eventually Adelaide, which is about 600km away. Alternatively, just over 100km directly north of Port Fairy is the Grampians National Park – another Eden for

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motorcycle riders. If time is of the essence, the A1 can be picked up to lead, via the fastest route possible, back to Melbourne in three to four hours.

However, taking the A1 after the Great Ocean Road is a bit like going on a rebound date with the dull bird your mate just dumped after Miranda Kerr tells you it's over. Being almost as big a fan of Miranda Kerr as I am of the Great Ocean Road, for me it was back the way I came — with every inch of road being just as stunning the second time round. In fact, once you know what's coming, the sheer

beauty of the landscape — and indeed the Road that cuts through it — becomes even more telling. Plus, knowing what's coming up helps you forget about the tourists. And the coach drivers. And the local speed demons. And even, sometimes, almost, the caravans.

Settling into the homeward-bound rhythm and enjoying the bitumen for all it was worth, I found my constant smile was developing into a full-on, uncontrollable laugh; the Great Ocean Road didn't need me to prove why it is so great, it does that all by itself.



HARLEY-DAVIDSON FXDF FAT BOB

Grunt-fuelled styling with superb finishing, the Harley-Davidson Fat Bob definitely ticks all the right boxes in the tough boy looks department with those distinctive double headlights and funky LED tail end. The matt black paint job and understated graphics also get a big thumbs-up – as does its low-slung stance and fat-arse tyres. Under the tank sits the type of engine we've come to expect from Milwaukee, with more grunt than a gorilla on heat. Acceleration comes by the pint only. However, the Fat Bob is also a remarkably comfortable bike and held its own over the three-day cruise along the Great Ocean Road — though my pillion companion would sooner drink a schooner of petrol than agree with me on this. The Fat Bob may be ideal for a solo circuit of one of the world's great roads — or even quick romantic two-up blast somewhere not too far away; but this is not a bike for touring with a passenger.

Riding the Fat Bob home along the Great Ocean Road, it was easy to understand why the model sits high in the charts as one of H-D's bestselling models in Australia, but I'm sure you'll make up your own mind about that from the pictures.

STUFF WE'RE TESTING

AS THE NAME IMPLIES, HERE'S A VARIETY OF STUFF WE'RE TESTING.
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THIS IS STUFF TIM SANFORD IS ACTUALLY USING.



UPDATE: KABUTO AEROBLADE 3 HELMET

RRP: \$450

SIZES: XS to XXL

I like this helmet. It is comfortable and quiet. An intriguing point is that although it is the same size (XL) as my previous Kabuto, it is slightly larger. Not enough to have it wobbling on my head you understand, but certainly a bit bigger. The air vents (one wide one at the chin, two up on each side at the front and one wide one at the back) allow good ventilation in hot weather. The vents are also very easy to feel and operate while wearing summer gloves. It's not quite so easy in winter but it can be done.

The visor has several click stops for part opening and it always stays where it's put. There are little tabs on both sides of the visor to get your thumb under. My only complaint is that there is no position where the visor can be just cracked open when it's foggy or raining but that criticism seems pretty common to a lot of helmets. At least the Aeroblade 3 can be fitted with an anti-fog insert that works well, though I must tell you that fitting said fog-free sheet was hilarious because all of the instructions are in Japanese. Fortunately the fitting isn't too technical and there are some line drawings to guide you. Loads of fun for such a simple task!

One very good feature of the visor is the utterly simple procedure to swap from dark to clear. Press the little lugs on the hinges and the visor comes off. Locate the visor over the pins, give it a push and the new visor is on. Brilliant. Wish they were all that easy.

The strap is secured with a double-D clasp and it stays where you put it. There is also a small stud to secure the loose end of the strap and although that's quite small, I can usually get it to fasten. As far as noise is concerned, the Aeroblade 3 is quiet enough around town to hear the traffic and when I have ridden out of the city having forgotten to put earplugs in, it's not so noisy that it's distracting.

The lining and the external finish of the helmet are both of a high standard as is the strap clasp, and all of that adds up to a feeling of quality that has previously been the preserve of rather more costly helmets. The shell is of a composite design.

I have been happy to use the Aeroblade 3 for track day riding as well as cruising.

DRAGGIN' JEANS MEN'S CLASSIC

RRP: \$259

SIZES: 28 to 44

COLOURS: Black or Blue/Indigo

Black, good looking and good fitting with invisible protection sums up these jeans. The black has stayed black over several months of use, which is a plus because black jeans that turn into dark grey jeans are just not the business in the fashion world. As for fitting, they are long enough to be a good fit with boots but they are slightly snug at the waist. This could be due to a slight (?) expansion of the Sandbag waistline (not likely) or a slightly tighter cut at the waist compared to the length. Put it this way: the next size up would have the cuffs dragging on the ground.

They are comfortable to ride in by the usual test of not noticing them once the wheels are rolling. The pockets are medium sized but because of the cut I usually don't ride with anything in them. As for protection, you need to rely on the reputation of Draggin' Jeans for that one because as yet I haven't slid down the road in them. The protection panels are stitched into the insides of the trousers so it's not obvious when you walk into a café that they are bike-specific. In fact I have happily worn them in winter because thanks to the extra material they are quite warm.

Overall I am impressed and I wear them every time I ride. Check out dragginjeans.net and follow the links.

MOTODRY AIRBLADE 2 SUMMER SERIES JACKET

RRP: \$199.95

SIZES: S to 5XL

This jacket is designed with Australian summers in mind and it does an excellent job of flowing cooling air over your body thanks to its fabric, which is basically a mesh. From a distance it looks like any other modern jacket made from synthetic fibres but hold it up to the light and all is revealed: the fabric is all mesh. I used it last summer and thought it just well vented, and it wasn't until I was in a hurry one midwinter's day and grabbed it that I realised my mistake. By the time I'd got to the local servo I was absolutely frozen from the icy blast past my body. So don't be dumb and ride with it in winter, please.

It has shoulder padding and a pad for your back. The pads are held in pockets so I suspect that you could beef them up if you wanted to. There is an internal pocket with a Velcro closure that is big enough for your wallet and two external zipped pockets that aren't. They will easily take small items such as a phone but there is a special pocket on the left sleeve for that. It has a cord running up to your ears so that you can either listen to music or hear the phone when it rings and stop to answer it. A nice touch is the provision of several spare earpieces for the earbuds.

Inside there is another tiny pocket with a clear plastic face. My iPhone is too big for this one but I think it would take one of the older and smaller phones. That one's a bit of a mystery.

It's a very good jacket — but for summer only please. Check out the Motodry Airblade 2 jacket at your local retailer of quality motorcycle gear or log on to motonational.com.au and follow the links.



PANTHER TRIKES



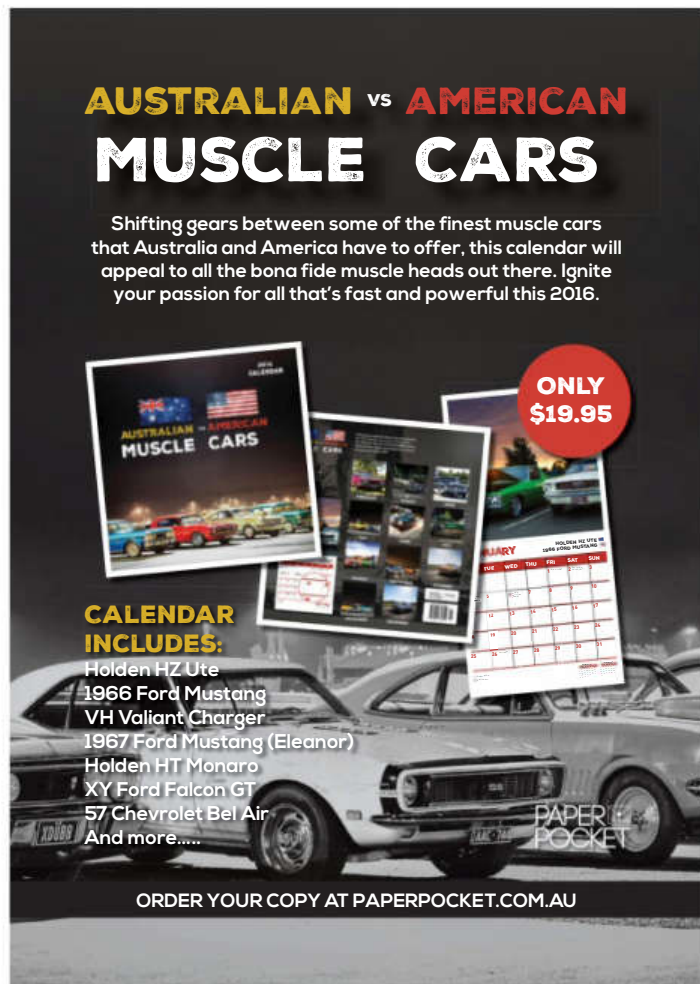
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"The Sendra Engineers arrived wednesday after ordering Monday morning. When I opened the box and pulled one out I just couldn't believe the quality and stunning looks of these boots. I showed my best mate (who is female and loves clothes and shoes....) she looked at them and her reaction was "WOW!!!" They feel great, fit perfect and did I mention they look good!!! Service, quality.... everything about your store is first rate awesome! Thanks so much - can't wait for my next order which will be a pair of Texas Caimans!" - Anthony, Gold Coast

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UPDATE: ALPINESTARS GRAN TORINO GTX BOOTS**RRP: \$399.95****SIZES: 38 TO 48**

These boots are designed for touring and they incorporate good features for protection and practicality/comfort. They are low-key in looks with a traditional black leather outer and a single reflective Alpinestars logo at the heel. There is a protection pad near the ankle bone, while the toe and heel are both reinforced. This means for touring that you've got a boot which is comfortable on the bike, which offers good protection if you need it but which will allow you to walk around at your destination in complete comfort. On a long road trip, when your riding boots are your only footwear, that's a big plus.

Leather on the outside and Gore-Tex lining means that they should be good for a while in wet weather and the zip and Velcro closure system means they fit snugly around your



leg. Mick has worn his in the wet much more than I have and he says they are the only completely waterproof motorcycle boots he has ever worn.

They work equally well if you like to tuck your pants into the boots or leave them outside. (Damn pirate – MW)

These boots, made in Croatia, have been in use for a couple of years now and are still doing the job and looking good. There's not a stitch unravelling nor any unsightly wear marks. That says heaps for the original quality.

My verdict: they offer great comfort and they give good feel of the brake pedal and gear lever. I like them a lot.

They're available wherever Alpinestars are sold, or log on to monzaimports.com.au and follow the links to the Alpinestars Road Footwear catalogue.

**UPDATE: ALPINESTARS JET ROAD GORE-TEX GLOVES****RRP: \$199.95****SIZES: S-3XL**

These Tech Touring gloves do a very good job of keeping the cold outside, where it belongs. My riding this winter in near-zero surroundings has been devoid of numb fingers thanks to these effective cold barriers.

The exterior of the glove is synthetic fabric with leather on the palm and finger grip surfaces. This makes for a comfortable grip on the bars with no slip. The little finger has a web across to the third finger to keep the pinky safe if you do a fall. That's a nice touch drawn straight from the company's competition experience.

Inside is a Gore-Tex membrane to keep out the water and a warm lining on the inside next to your skin. It's a good combination and I found it never let me down. Now the gloves have done lots of riding they are easier to get on and off and neither the zippers nor the Velcro straps are showing any signs of wear.

Well designed, well made and still going strong, but now they've been superseded by the Polar Gore-Tex glove, same price and size range. They're available wherever Alpinestars are sold, or log on to monzaimports.com.au and follow the links to the Alpinestars Road Apparel catalogue.



HD ROAD STREET 500

FROM THE FIRST TIME WE LAID EYES ON IT, WE'VE RECKONED THAT HARLEY'S STREET 500 WAS GOING TO BE A HIT WITH RIDERS IN A VARIETY OF AGE GROUPS. WE'VE HAD A FEW DIFFERENT RIDERS THROW A LEG OVER IT AND THIS TIME IT'S A GRANDMOTHER'S VIEW.

Words: Kristine McDonald Photos: Tim Sanford







**GRINS**

I could live with this bike
Costs a little less than \$10,000

GRIPES

Useless mirrors
Hot on my right leg even in winter

When I sat on this Harley the first thing I noticed was the very light clutch lever pull. If you have small hands like mine a long reach to the lever and a heavy clutch action don't make for a nice ride, especially in traffic.

The bike feels light and I could easily put my feet flat on the ground. I could get to the sidestand with no trouble, could pull it up and get the bike ready to ride with no problem at all. There is no engine cutout, so you could leave the bike in gear when you kick the sidestand out. That also means that you could ride away with the sidestand down and that's not a good thing.

This bike is aimed at a different riding group from the company's traditional market, which tends to be mature and pretty experienced; the Street 500 is aimed at the younger rider and it is approved for learners under the LAMS scheme so I looked at it as if I was a learner starting out riding.

There's a good score for the engine, which has more than enough power to keep the bike out of the traffic but not so much that it frightens you. Same for the brakes. I have heard people say the brakes are not strong enough but I think they're quite good. They give you stopping that keeps your confidence up and like the engine the strength is there but there's no intimidation. With my small hands I used four fingers on the front lever and I got smooth and strong stopping every time. The back brake is a slightly different story though. It's strong enough but I found the pedal sat a bit lower than where my foot wanted it to be. Fixing that looked easy but I couldn't get the small spanners to fit on the brake push rod and turn it no matter how I tried, so the bike loses a bit there. Pity because the back brake is good too. There is no ABS but I guess that would add a fair bit to the cost.

My first ride. The gearshift was loud but firm. Every time I changed gear there was a click and in it went; lovely to use. The lever sat too high above my boot but it was a five-minute job to get it where I wanted it. With the light clutch it was so easy to get the bike rolling and away but as soon as I was out on the road a major problem cropped up. This is a bike for learners and new riders need to see what's coming up behind them. They can forget that with these mirrors. They are not wide enough and all I could see

was my arms unless I moved around to see into the mirror. I think this could be because the bars are a bit too wide and the stems of the mirrors are too short. It's an easy fix but if the bike is aimed at inexperienced riders it's not good at all.

I liked the styling of the bike and if you know Harleys you'll see that it looks a bit like the XLCR1000 Café Racer the firm made for a short while in the late 1970s. You can get it in two colours. My test bike was all black and there is another one that has the tank, the front guard and the tailpiece done in bright red.

One of the things Harleys are famous for is their build quality and attention to detail. How can I put this? When you buy your 'big' Harley you'll see significant differences: the speedo won't fog up, the layout of the cables will be neater and the build quality will be higher.

Riding the bike was a very pleasant experience. When you're learning you need a bike that does the basic job with no fuss and the Street 500 does just that. Traffic is no problem because the clutch and gearbox are brilliant and you won't worry about stalling. I loved the power and the bike just rolled up hills like they weren't there. The engine is smooth and although you know it's there, you don't have to put up with annoying vibrations. Its cruise is effortless and it loves to just roll along while you sit back and enjoy the experience of being out on a motorcycle. The bike is nicely balanced at low speeds and although it is quite light to move around in corners it is not quite as nimble as the Suzuki Boulevard I tested recently.


The footpegs sit halfway between touring and the forward location of footboards and I liked them. The ride over potholes and rough bits of road was good and I always felt quite comfortable. The ride feels a bit hard at first but it seems to grow on you the further you ride. The back suspension can be adjusted with a C-spanner but I couldn't find one on the bike. The indicators are very bright, which is good, but the warning lights in the speedo are way too small, which is not good. And if you're a returning rider with older eyes you might like bigger numbers on the speedo too. High beam is good but I can't tell you about low beam because it didn't work. Blown globe I think.

This is a good bike and I enjoyed riding it. As a learner bike it does most things well but the mirrors need changing.



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IF IT WERE MY BIKE WHAT I WOULD CHANGE ...

I'd give it narrower bars and wider mirrors. A set of bar-end mirrors would do the job.



QUICKSPECS

Model: Harley-Davidson Street 500

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Bore x stroke: 69 x 66mm

Displacement: 494cc

Compression: 11:1

Power: No one's saying

Torque: 40Nm (29.5ft/lb) @ 3500rpm

Transmission: 6-speed, wet multi-plate clutch, belt final drive

Suspension: F: Telescopic forks. R: Twin shocks

Brakes: F: Single rotor with twin-piston caliper.

R: Single rotor with twin-piston caliper.

Tyres: F: 100/80R17 R: 140/75R15

Frame: Tubular cradle

Seat Height: 709mm

Wheelbase: 1534mm

Length: 2225mm

Weight: 218kg (wet)

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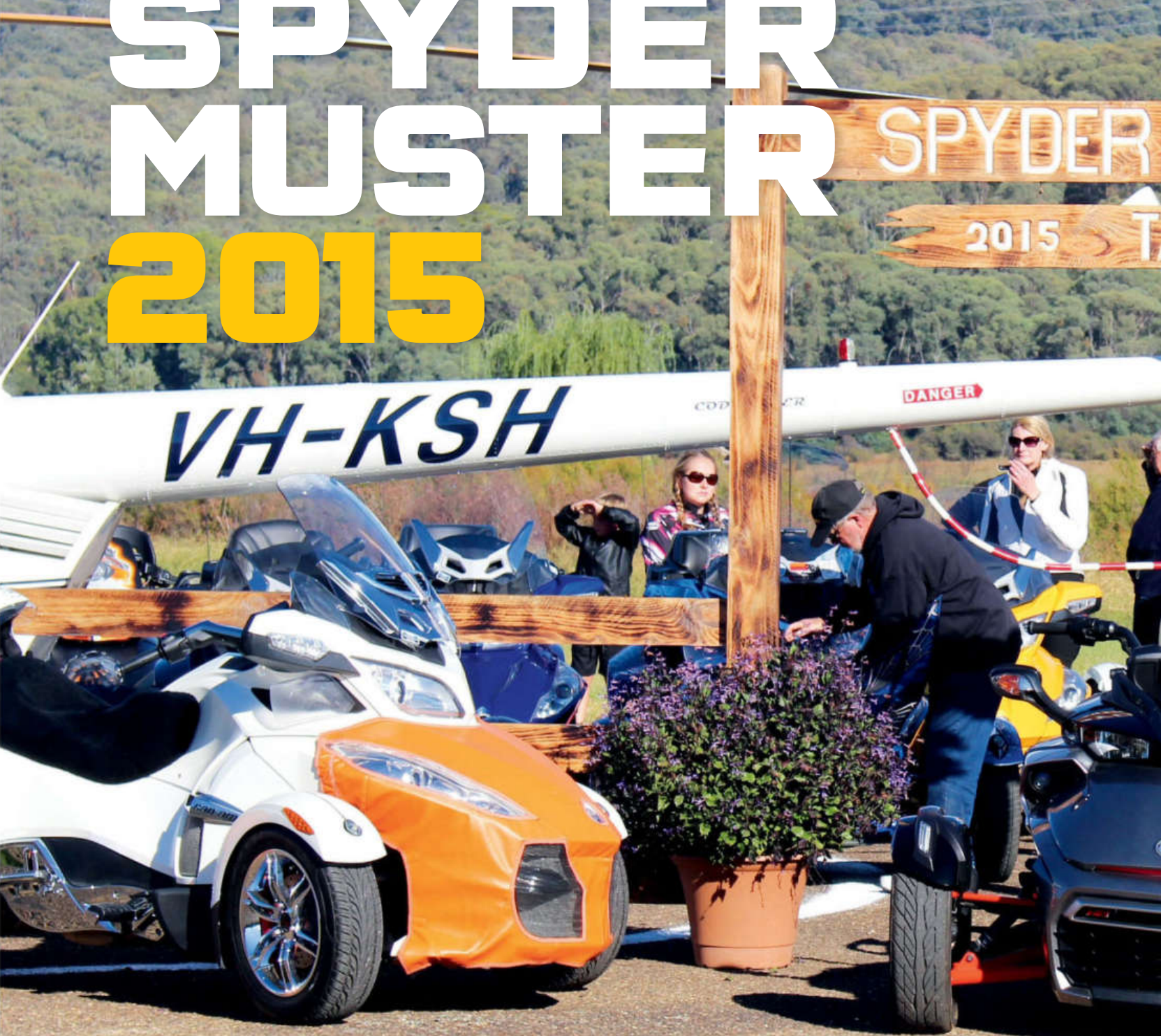
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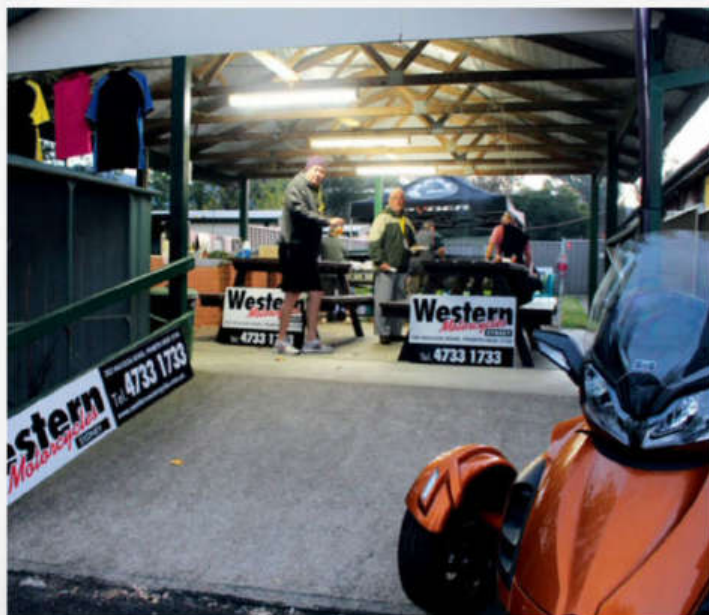
*Words: Laurie and Trina Christensen
Photos: Mustered Spyder Ryders*

SPYDER MUSTER 2015



**THERE WAS MOVEMENT AT THE STATION
AS THE SPYDER RYDERS GATHERED IN THE
SNOWY MOUNTAINS.**







The Spyder Muster 2015 at Talbingo on the last weekend of March began with registration. Arrivals were greeted by the Spyder Muster Team and given their event welcome pack, which included a Spyder T-shirt and a few other goodies including a welcome drink card to be used at either the Lodge or the Country Club, which was sponsored by Melbourne Sea-Doo (What was sponsored?).

While at registration members were given the opportunity to take a tour of the Snow Hydro Tumut #3 power station. As this is not normally open to the public, it was a bit of a bonus. We all gathered at the Lodge for dinner and drinks and to chat about Spyders. After dinner was done and dusted, we headed back to the Talbingo caravan park for a pancake snack.





Saturday's breakfast was held at the camp kitchen and sponsored by Canberra Motorcycles. As a bonus, it included the debut of the Can-Am Spyder F3 that arrived from another event being held in Wodonga. This gave most mustered Spyder ryders the chance to look over the F3 for the first time. After breakfast we headed off for a ride to Paddy's River Falls. Along the way, we took a short stop off at Cabramurra Information Centre for coffee, tea and nibbles. Soon, we suited up again to take in the spectacular scenery and roads on our way to lunch. James, the owner of Talbingo Caravan Park, greeted all the riders at Paddy's River Falls rest area for lunch, which the local Progress association supplied. The

ryders were then set free to head back any way they wished.

The evening's dinner and entertainment at the Country Club was sponsored by Bombardier. As the night wore on we held a raffle and an auction with lots of fun and laughter. The band kicked off after everyone had had their fill at the big buffet feed. The night was a success and everyone had a great time.

Western Motorcycles sponsored Sunday's breakfast and after we'd eaten our fill, we headed off to get photos around the Spyder Muster Corral and a helicopter on the nearby landing strip. From there, ryders headed off to the Tumut #3 power station where the Spyder Muster Corral was re-erected so

every ryder could get a single photo of themselves and their Spyder under the Corral. This shot was then sent out to everyone by email. Ryders then returned to the main street of Talbingo for a Spyder Show & Shine, which was open to local residents for a closer look at us and our mounts. Trina Thomson, the Mayor of Tumut, joined us to help judge the Spyderys. The winners of the Show & Shine are listed below.

We finished off with lunch and presentation of trophies and the announcement that, by popular demand, 2016 Spyder Muster will be held back in Talbingo.

Check out the website for more info or to register: spydermuster.com.au





Trophy Winners

CATEGORY	NAME
People's Choice	Bob Coleman
Best RT	Robert Martinelli
Best ST	Lois Knight
Best RS	Gary Kuster
Lowest km on Spyder	Carolyn Edwards
Highest km on Spyder	Fagan Fulton
Cleanest	Jeff Gamble
Dirtiest	Kevin Moodie



THE ANZAC PROJECT

Words & Photos: Mick Withers



SOME OF **AUSTRALIA'S FINEST** YOUNG MEN
HAVE MADE THE **ULTIMATE SACRIFICE** IN
THE SERVICE OF OUR COUNTRY. MANY LIE
FORGOTTEN BUT **PRIVATE GEORGE BENSON**
WILL LONG BE REMEMBERED.





We reckon there are as many reasons for customising a bike as there are bikes, or owners. Some are micro-managed and planned to the last detail while many just happen organically. There are good and bad results either way but really, if the owner's happy with the final product, does it matter what anyone else thinks?

Greg Benson and his wife Nicole bought their brand-new Triumphs from Barry at Bikers Motorcycles in Bathurst. That was in 2012 and they'd already tried to buy closer to home but the salesman wouldn't give them a straight answer when they asked for a cash price on the Thunderbird and a Bonneville. Wonder how much commission he missed out on?

Riding the stock Thunderbird was good but as the kilometres clicked up on the odometer, Greg found new and interesting ways to make it better. What follows may not be in the correct sequence but the order of execution is less important than the result.

To keep valuable parts cornering above terra firma, a suspension workover was called for and Greg chose Ikon as the supplier of shock absorbers and fork springs. Happy with that result, Greg also started using a 180/55-17 rear tyre instead of the standard 50-series for that touch more ground clearance.

"It's a work bike," explains Greg. "It gets used and then gets washed."

Bits to make it look more like the owner's vision were added as time went by. The chrome forks look good in isolation but are complemented by the owner-polished wheels. Shiny carries through to the Hog Slayers, a custom exhaust from England. The style was what Greg wanted and the performance was completed with a Power Commander V, fitted and tuned by Dave at Sydney Dyno.

The most obvious feature of this 2012 Thunderbird is the paintwork. Greg approached Triumph Australia with his plans for The Anzac Project, who donated a tank in base black and the remainder of the bodywork raw. His working relationship with Triumph began with his Thunderbird's previous incarnation when it sported Thor bodywork and won Best Paint at Borderfest.

Intertwined with this story is Greg's great-uncle George, an Anzac who was lost in the mud of Fromelles on the western front. For more of that story, check out the sidebar.

"The Anzac Project was simply a way to honour them," explains Greg. "That's all."

It's the paint that attracts people before anything else.

Greg chose Wayne Harrison from Advanced Airbrush to turn his ideas into art. "I gave him my ideas and let him have a free run," explains Greg.





"He wanted a centrepiece and the right-hand side of the fuel tank became that focal point."

These pics were captured at Poppy Park in Penrith. This was a giant poppy containing 102,804 individual poppies, one for each Australian to have lost his/her life while serving our country in the army, air force or navy since the Sudan in 1885. To learn more about Poppy Park, visit poppypark.org.au.

"It's difficult to remember 102,804 names," says Greg, "though it's easy for 102,804 Australians to remember one name each."

FAMILY CONNECTION

George Verner Benson was a 21-year-old stockman from Inverell and a serving member of the 5th Light Horse in the Citizen Military Forces when he travelled to Dubbo to join the AIF on 21 July 1915. He was a member of D Company, 30th Battalion, and he embarked for Egypt on 9 November 1915. He landed in France on 23 June 1916 to join the British Expeditionary Force. On 19 July 1916, while carrying ammunition to the forward trenches at

Fromelles, he was killed by an exploding shell. His great adventure was over. Sadly, like many more of his generation, his final resting place was listed as 'No Known Grave'.

In 2012, a mass grave was discovered in Fromelles and thanks to the wonders of modern science, George was identified by DNA through Greg's father. George now rests in the Fromelles (Pheasant Wood) Military Cemetery, France.

Lest we forget.

CRUISER PRICE GUIDE

New bike prices can go up and down like the stock market, so in every issue we'll bring you the sticker prices. To be completely up to date with things such as factory discounts and incentives, check the importers' websites for more information. These are the prices the distributors gave us; some may be promotional prices and may no longer be available when you go to the shop. Some of the prices are ride away and the rest are plus on-road costs. Check with your local dealer.

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Just for fun

Why so serious?

Words: Tim Sanford

Life is so serious isn't it? I was staring at a packet of breakfast cereal the other morning and the packet had printed advice about its nutritious contents. "Eat me" it said, "on the run or in a bowl". The "on the run" bit was in big print but the other, apparently less likely method of "in a bowl", was quite tiny. This says loads about how we should run our lives, does it not? Not a moment is to be squandered on the essential act of eating and although it is recognised that there are some weird folk (this particularly weird folk for example) who continue with the ancient practice of eating breakfast out of crockery, the modern way is to stuff the food into the gob while running, bussing, training or driving to work. Note here that we weirdoes who ride motorcycles are, as always, left out. I don't know if you've ever tried to eat or drink while riding but I can tell you it ain't easy with a full-face helmet, that's for sure. As an aside here's another Sandbag whinge at how we are wickedly ill-treated: cup holders abound in cars, but I have yet to see one on a motorcycle.

The purpose behind the stuffing of food in "on the run" is to save time. Time, or

more properly the lack of it, has been blamed for many social ills; and the main one is work-related stress. Time is needed for two jobs to pay the mortgage. Time is needed to get the children to school. Time is needed for all those essential elements of life but its most vital aspect is we need it so we can have some relief from all the other stuff. We need time for fun.

Once you've got the time for fun, the next question is how to spend it? Cruise? Expensive. Overseas holiday? More expensive. Visit the in-laws? Seriously expensive counselling. Of course with us it's just so breathtakingly simple: we go for a ride. You remember the first *On Any Sunday* film? That was all about the fun you could have on different sorts of motorcycles. Much of it focused on racing of course but the diversity was the point and that hasn't changed over however many years it is since that flick first flashed on our screens. For us the principal vehicle for our fun is the cruiser but I'll bet quite a few readers are also enjoying the rapture that comes from watching their children and grandchildren grinning from the two-wheeled experience.

A motorcycle is basically a means of travel, a way of getting from A to B, and if you use one for the dull but necessary task of commuting you'll already be aware of that. Yet even during the dreary commute there are times when your face has a big grin painted all over it. Sitting at the lights – and with the new intelligent laws of course you're right up the front – and there's the adjacent cage with some puffed-up personage sitting behind the wheel dreaming about how he's King of the World. Green light and the motorcycle quickly demonstrates that it, not the King of the World, has the power. Just an effortless wrist-twist and you're outta there. Safe in front, secure that life is as it should be. Your grin says "That was fun!"

The best part though is a ride with your mates when you can get away and abandon all that stress to those who want to revel in it. Recently I did a Day in the Saddle on a Moto Guzzi Cali. Most of the glorious aspects were in that ride: fabulous weather, even through Oberon, a magnificent machine and scenery to enjoy over every hill and around every bend. To make it perfect all it needed was a few mates to ride with but I did it alone and I was happy with that. That ride was fun.

Lots of people have tried to work out why riding is so much fun. Is it the way the bike rolls through the countryside? Is it the incredibly fluid way a motorcycle flows through corners? In a car there are all sorts of forces acting sideways but there's none of that on a bike, it just seems so effortless. And for my money there's also the solitude. The Esteemed Editorial Person is a prolific listener to music while riding. Me? I use the time to see if I can remember how to think and also to write strange columns in my head while the tyres trundle over tarmac. That's fun.

There's yet another way to have fun on a motorcycle: try to make it go as fast as possible around a racetrack or down a drag strip. For those of you who are unaware of his skills, the Esteemed Editorial Person has been consumed by drag racing for nearly as long as I've known him (hundreds of years) but he is far too modest to shout his latest personal achievement from the rooftops so I'll do it for him. Mick went drag racing the other day and broke the magic ten-second barrier on his Hayabusa. Congratulations, Mick, and welcome to the Nines.

He signs off every email 'Have fun'.

He does. Every day. Maybe more people should try it. **C&T**



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